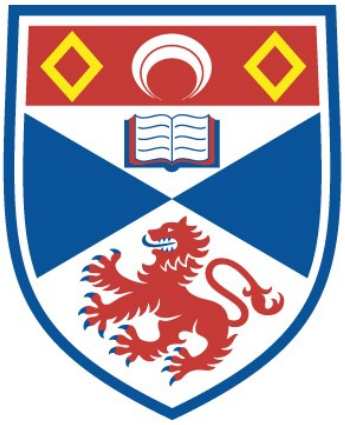
BILDUNG AND INITIATION : INTERPRETING GERMAN AND AMERICAN NARRATIVE TRADITIONS

Miguel Batista

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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Abstract

This thesis is divided into two main parts. The first, comprising the three initial chapters, looks, in chapter one, at the specifically German origins of the *Bildungsroman*, its distinctive features, and the difficulties surrounding its transplantation into the literary contexts of other countries. Particular attention is paid to the ethical dimension of the genre, i.e. to the relation between the individual self and the exterior world, and how it affects individual formation.

The focus then shifts to American literature, and the term 'narrative of initiation' is recommended as a credible alternative to '*Bildungsroman*'. Allowing for similarities between them, it is none the less strongly suggested that the *Bildungsroman* of German origin and the American narrative of initiation should be seen as being intrinsically different, principally because of the different cultural backgrounds that shaped them. Several features of the theme of initiation are postulated as decisive factors in the discrepancies between the initiatory narrative and the *Bildungsroman*.

Analysis of six texts — three of each literary tradition — follows, to provide support for the theoretical discussion of the terms introduced in chapter one. Three *Bildungsromane* are considered in the second chapter, namely Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* and Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich*; and three narratives of initiation in chapter three: Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*. Their relevance to the tradition of German and American fiction as a whole and as precursors of Mann's *Der Zauberberg* and Hemingway's *The Nick Adams Stories* is considered.

A direct comparison between Mann's and Hemingway's texts constitutes the second part of this thesis, wholly contained in chapter four. In addition to a comprehensive critical reading of both narratives, the contemporaneity of *Der Zauberberg* and *The Nick Adams Stories* is taken into account, and consequently special consideration is given to the texts' close relation with the cultural and historical realities of the early twentieth century, particularly the impact of the First World War. With the assistance of Jung's theories, an increased awareness of death and of the dark side of the psyche — though dealt with differently in both texts — is put forward as a significant factor in the deviation of *Der Zauberberg* and *The Nick Adams Stories* from the traditions of the *Bildungsroman* and of the narrative of initiation. This departure leads to a re-appraisal of the relation between the protagonists and their society, and to a new ethical attitude that presupposes different, more modern conceptions of what *Bildung* and initiation represent in the context of the early twentieth century. How and why they changed and if they survived as literary notions are questions this thesis attempts to answer.

Declarations

(i) I, Miguel Batista, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 98000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Date 01/11/03.. Signature of candidate .....

(ii) I was admitted as a research student in September 1999 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. in Comparative Literary Studies in May 2001; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1999 and 2003.

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(iii) I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Ph.D. in Comparative Literary Studies in the University of St. Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

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What can I say about my family that I have not told them already? Well, I never said it in English: so this thesis is for my grandparents, whom I have missed dearly for the past six years; it is for my godparents and for my aunt Cristina and my uncle Bernardo and my cousins Raquel and Ana. This thesis is for you, mum and dad, for all the effort you have put into mine and my sisters' *Bildung*; this is for my sisters, who are such an important part of my life that, forget about the thesis, *nothing* would be possible without your presence. And this is for Rita, and for the family we will start one day.

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I finish by thanking all deserving people I forgot to mention.

to my family, for helping me get here
and
to Rita, for taking me further

Abbreviations

DGH Gottfried Keller, *Der Grüne Heinrich*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, edited by Peter Villwock (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker, 1996).

GH Keller, *Green Henry*, translated by A. M. Holt (London: Calder, 1960).

HF Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Tom Sawyer's Comrade)*, (New York and London: Harper, 1912).

IOT Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925).

IS Adalbert Stifter, *Indian Summer*, translated by Wendell Frye (New York, Berne and Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1985).

MM Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter, 3rd ed. (London: Martin Secker, 1932).

MWW Hemingway, *Men Without Women* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927)

NAS Hemingway, *The Nick Adams Stories*, edited by Philip Young (New York: Scribner, 1999).

NS Stifter, *Der Nachsommer*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4, edited by Michael Benedikt and Herbert Hornstein (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1956).

RBC Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage: An Episode of the American Civil War* (Norwalk: The Easton Press, 1980).

WMA Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Apprenticeship*, 2 vols., translated by Thomas Carlyle (London: Chapman and Hall, 1899).

WML Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, in *Goethes Werke*, vol. 7, edited by Erich Trunz (Hamburg: Wegner, 1957).

WO Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio* (London: Penguin, 1992).

WTN Hemingway, *Winner Take Nothing* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933)

ZB Mann, *Der Zauberberg* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1999).

Preface

> To me [*Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*] seems perhaps the very worst book I have ever read. No Englishman could have written such a book.
>
> Samuel Butler

It is very hard to go through the history of German literature without eventually coming across the term '*Bildungsroman*', and these days one can seemingly find examples of this novelistic genre even in the most obscure literary anthologies of many a country: the *Bildungsroman* has in fact become Germany's most recognisable literary export, a term used again and again to label a variety of novels in a variety of countries. It has also been applied to literary forms other than the novel, and it has even been used beyond literature. So this thesis begins and ends with the question of knowing which border is the more difficult to cross: the geographical or the cultural.

My interest in the *Bildungsroman* genre began while reading Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*, and, as much available criticism tends to regard Mann's novel as a *Bildungsroman*, I became intrigued by the fact that such a description of *Der Zauberberg* would to a certain extent couple it with another text I was very familiar with, namely Ernest Hemingway's *The Nick Adams Stories*, also frequently labelled a *Bildungsroman*. Yet these texts seem so fundamentally different, in style, theme, rhythm and structure, that one cannot help but wonder how they could both be made to fit into the same literary category. The fact that Hemingway's text is not even a novel but a collection of short stories only adds to the conundrum.

Still, there are some similarities between these texts and, as present-day 'comparative literature involves the study of texts across cultures', pinning down how the *Bildungsroman* came into being in Germany, and identifying how — or *if* — its transplantation to other countries and to other literatures did occur became therefore the starting points of my study.[1] In the end, the question will remain the same; it will still have to do with crossing borders.

Described in general terms, the *Bildungsroman* narrates an individual's — almost always a young man's — path through life, from his younger years to emotional and intellectual maturity. This path takes the form of a progressive process of self-improvement towards a point of personal satisfaction, which in the end leads to harmony, both personal and with society's norms. As a definition, this is quite a broad one, and similar ones could be found in a dictionary of literary terms. However, not only have recent critical studies questioned several assumptions behind the *Bildungsroman*, but the impressive variety of novels now thought of as being *Bildungsromane* has also put in jeopardy, according to some critics, the usefulness of the designation as a critical term.

[1] Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 1. Current issues concerning the status of comparative literary studies are tackled by Bassnett in a

It becomes apparent, after a close examination, that there are indeed many controversies surrounding the *Bildungsroman*, both within German literary criticism and regarding the status of the genre in other literatures. The fact that the German novels that are often considered exemplary *Bildungsromane* focus on the description of the inner formation of the protagonist, for instance, is usually regarded as giving them a distinctive character. This is a very important and decisive attribute they seem to share, and one which separates, broadly speaking, the German *Bildungsroman* from apparently similar types of the novel in other countries. Such is the case with the American novel of initiation; after all, novels that portray the formation of a young protagonist are fairly common in various national literatures, which in turn raises the question of whether the application of the German term '*Bildungsroman*' to such texts is not actually diverting attention from important, distinctive, culturally acquired characteristics inherent in each different manifestation of these so-called coming-of-age narratives.

Eight such narratives will be considered. Unlike the treatment of the six narratives dealt with in the second and third chapters, I only conduct a direct comparison between texts in the penultimate chapter, and this for reasons of relevance and, mainly, of contemporaneity, as both *Der Zauberberg* and *The Nick Adams Stories* — or at least the bulk of the tales that compose this short-story sequence — appeared at around the same time. Dating from the beginning

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comprehensive overview — historical and otherwise — of the origins, evolution and changing perceptions of this area of critical theory. See her 'Introduction'.

of the twentieth century, both narratives deal, albeit from different perspectives, with the socio-historical and cultural collapse that led to and followed the First World War. Both Mann's and Hemingway's texts are highly aware of and engage with the realities of their time, and by so doing they are undoubtedly modern, modernist even, for, coinciding with them, they also confront the visions and conceptions of that period of literary history.

This direct comparison, whilst grounding the texts in the context of their time, is related to what Susan Bassnett identifies as a new notion of comparative literary studies, one that firmly rejects notions of ahistoricity.[2] *Der Zauberberg* and *The Nick Adams Stories* are closely related to the spirit of their time, and it is certainly much more relevant to look at their interconnections than to compare and contrast texts of excessively different settings and/or periods, as would happen, for example, if one compared Hemingway's text with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, usually considered the prototype of the *Bildungsroman*. In the case of chapter four, then, the comparison is direct, parallel, whereas in chapters two and three it involves mere juxtaposition; either way, both types of comparison are ways of not only showing but also of emphasising the distinctiveness of different texts.

Besides *Der Zauberberg*, or, to be more precise, in order better to understand *Der Zauberberg*, three novels central to the *Bildungsroman* tradition

[2] Ibid., p. 41

are examined: Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Adalbert Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* and Gottfried Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich*.[3] The *Bildungsroman*, then, is the starting point of all comparison present in this thesis, the yardstick against which the narrative of initiation is seen. The characteristics of the *Bildungsroman* are identified, the debate surrounding the question of *Bildung* examined, and the focus is firmly placed on the ethical dimension of the genre, i.e. the relation between inner and outer factors. The relation between the individual self and the world/society is the primary interest of the *Bildungsroman*, and the reconciliation of individual wishes with social realities the ultimate goal of the *Bildungsprozeß*. This agreement is entirely ethical in nature, and the fact that the *Bildungsroman* deals with formative years only makes the ethical positioning of the protagonist all the more important, as s/he must attempt to find an orientation towards life, love, family, religion and society, towards all concrete and abstract realities s/he is faced with as an individual that aspires to have sound intellect and judgement.

The study of American examples sees, in its turn, *The Nick Adams Stories* placed in a tradition that includes Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*. For a number of reasons, this tradition is shown as

[3] Each text analysed in the second and third chapters was due to have more or less the same space devoted to it, but I believe that *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*'s prototypical status deserved special consideration and therefore I devote greater length to its analysis. In the American examples, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, despite preceding all other narratives of initiation dealt with in this thesis in chronological terms, does not enjoy, however, the same clear-cut prototypical position as Goethe's novel does in the context of German literature.

fundamentally different from the tradition of the German *Bildungsroman*. One of them is the protagonist's ethical and moral formation, so important within the framework of the *Bildungsroman* genre, yet hardly a distinctive and self-conscious feature of the American narrative of initiation. Ethical behaviour, related as it is to the individual's attitude towards others and to her/his respect for the interests of others, implies a certain rapport with society, a hallmark and goal of the *Bildungsroman*, but not of the narrative of initiation, in which society is seen as hostile and adverse to the protagonist, a threat to his individuality.

In most literary works that deal with the relationship between different individuals, an ethical positioning does ultimately emerge, of course, on part of both the narrator and the protagonist. Every act of the individual, intentionally or not, is an ethical choice, for it has consequences upon the lives of others: even a decision to act unethically against others represents an ethical choice. In the narrative of initiation, the search for an ethically balanced view of the world is not the main concern of the text, because the protagonist is too actively engaged in the world, usually confronting it, to consider consciously his own ethical formation. In the American narrative of initiation, it is not the relationship, but rather the confrontation between the individual and the world — often regarded as too damaging to the individual's aspirations —, which is the main issue.

The *Bildungsroman*, because it postulates an ultimate meaning in the relation between the individual and the world, is optimistic, and hence has even

been described as utopian and idealistic. Due to some of its religious undertones, the *Bildungsroman* portrays the individual in possession of a noumenon that is likely to be heightened by means of harmonious formation. If one could call that noumenal reality by another name, perhaps one might even call it soul; yet in the American narrative of initiation, the soul, if there is one, is damned. With this in mind, one begins to see why the *Bildungsroman* is concerned with the process of inner formation of the protagonist: underlying the *Bildungsideal* is a belief that a well-balanced formation can lead to the clarification of the individual's inner nature and consequently expand to include an improved, more profitable relationship with the world and with others.

Despite their differences, the *Bildungsroman* and the American narrative of initiation share an individualistic character, as both tend to focus on a single protagonist. Yet the narrative of initiation is more concerned with describing the overwhelmingly negative opposition between the individual and the social world, not with portraying the richness of the inner life of the protagonist. What the narrative of initiation affirms it that it is in contact with the realities of the world that the individual must find any kind of meaning to his life. It is in a world that is often shown as dehumanised that the protagonist must find that one great good thing which is true: that is the burden of the American initiate.

It was not easy to choose three representative works for each one of the two literary traditions under scrutiny. In German literature alone, the critic Jürgen

Jacobs lists thirty-five *Bildungsromane* until *Der Zauberberg*; another, Gerhard Mayer, catalogues twenty-six novels until the time of the Weimar Republic.[4] And it did not get any easier when it came to the American narrative of initiation.

The reasons behind the choice of examples will become clearer in the course of the textual analysis proper, but what I looked for in all the chosen texts were mainly two features: first of all, they had to exhibit some of the most noteworthy features of each type, well-knowing that no one text normally meets the entire set of criteria usually ascribed to a genre (or at least considers them in different orders of importance, of relevance). Secondly, each text had to have a clear and more or less close association with the text that preceded it chronologically, for only so, in association with what comes before (and with what comes after, if I might add), is it possible to better understand the relations between texts, and between writers: 'No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists.'[5] Matters of intertextuality, the relation of interdependence with previously existing texts, are at the heart of literary creation, and Mann's and Hemingway's texts do show an awareness of their heritage, which they expand and transform by investing and enriching it with the particular spirit of their time. As much of his writing dates from that same period

[4] For listings of the *Bildungsroman*, as alluded to above, see, respectively, Jürgen Jacobs, *Wilhelm Meister und seine Brüder: Untersuchungen zum deutschen Bildungsroman* (Munich: Fink, 1972), and Gerhard Mayer, *Der deutsche Bildungsroman: Von der Aufklärung bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1992).

[5] T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *Selected Essays*, 3rd ed. (London: Faber, 1951), p. 15

and has its realities as main subject, the ideas of Carl Gustav Jung will be extensively used when trying to establish the relations that connect both *Der Zauberberg* and *The Nick Adams Stories* enjoy with the world of their time, how these narratives learn to be independent amid the unavoidable interdependence of literary texts.

Genres should not be seen as monolithically self-contained structures, but rather as being dynamic, evolving, and the critic must continually be aware of that fact, reminding her/himself that genre evolution, after all, is a matter of tradition *and* of individual talent: 'How simple the writing of literature would be if it were only necessary to write in another way what has been well written. It is because we have had such great writers in the past that a writer is driven far out past where he can go, out to where no one can help him.'[6] So perhaps the critic's curse is that much of her/his work consists of minute categorisation, of identifying how texts relate to and become part of different literary movements or genres. That subjective, biased activity certainly makes the critic's (and the reader's) job easier, yet, as Hemingway words suggest, there is much more to literature than mere tradition.

[6] Ernest Hemingway, 'Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech', in *Literature Awards Winners* <http://www.literature-awards.com/nobelprize_winners/nobel_speech_1954.htm> [accessed 30 May 2003]

I

Defining the models

1. The *Bildungsroman*, the concept of *Bildung*, and some questions of genre definition

> The greatest of all arts, the art of life.
> Thomas Carlyle, *Preface to Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*

As literary terms go, few have been so used, abused and misused as the term *Bildungsroman*. It is true that German words have been in vogue for some time in literary criticism, yet the concept of *Bildung* is commonly accepted as being so "conspicuously" German that many Germanists have become suspicious of the ease with which the designation is frequently employed.[1] The term may indeed be closely related to the peculiarities of a certain German frame of mind, yet its indiscriminate use by much Anglo-Saxon criticism has given rise to claims that the original designation has basically been rendered pointless. The expression 'German frame of mind', of course, is one potentially fraught with danger, but the discussion of the theme of *Bildung* will hopefully validate its use.

The term *Bildungsroman* has essentially been worn out by overuse, then, as David L. Vanderwerken, referring to American literature, notes: 'The unwieldy German term, *Bildungsroman*, essentially untranslatable in English, has become our catch-all label to apply to everything from the *Autobiography of*

[1] See, for example, James Hardin's (ed.) 'Introduction' to *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

Benjamin Franklin to Neil Simon's *Biloxi Blues*.'[2] The problem here is that the *Bildungsroman* has a few features that can be seen in many of the German novels that are part of the tradition of the genre. These features *do* exist, however tempting it may be to dismiss such a claim with the accusation that such generalisations are only meant to facilitate the reading of the texts, and then to "pigeonhole" them. No novel labelled as a *Bildungsroman*, of course, incorporates all of the characteristics that are frequently said to be part of the genre, but the principles that find different forms of expression in different *Bildungsromane* can none the less be seen in various novels.

The *Bildungsroman* deals with the formation of a young individual, usually a young man, as seen before, and it pays great attention to his growing pains, so to speak. This young man is about to come of age, in the sense that he is about to enter the practical world of social responsibilities. As a result, he suffers from a kind of *Weltschmerz*, being at odds with the growing threat of specialisation that awaits him in that practical world, in the narrow society that will make but another piece out of him, one which is liable to be alienated, sold and replaced, to put it crudely.

In the tradition of other forms of the novel, like the picaresque, the protagonist faces his fair share of adventures and setbacks, learning by trial and error. He usually goes on some kind of journey, away from his usual, somewhat

[2] David L. Vanderwerken, *Faulkner's Literary Children* (New York: Lang, 1997), p. 2

oppressive surroundings. Yet, unlike those of the picaro, the experiences of the protagonist are only meaningful to him because they make him reflect, and that happens because he has particular inner qualities that allow him to profit from those same experiences. Unlike the *picaro*, the protagonist of the *Bildungsroman* can learn from his experiences, which permit the emergence of his true self, and the self, here seen as referring to the whole of what constitutes an individual, is the central concept of *Bildung*.

Exterior events must not impair the formation of the protagonist, something that would happen if these restricted him. Even if outside factors threaten to dictate the protagonist's choices, he has to seize the freedom to pursue his inclinations, whatever they might be, thus asserting his autonomous individuality. Just as in Kantian thought, the very morality of the protagonist's actions depends upon that freedom: 'Freedom in action excludes determination by anything outside ourselves [...]. The sole way in which we can be free, for Kant, is if our actions are determined by something within our own nature.'[3]

The protagonist evolves within a delicate equilibrium of inner and outer forces — the former carrying more weight to start with, then —, until he has become, according to his own understanding, free. He is then ready to reconcile himself with the community he comes from and, more generally, with society: the *Bildungsprozeß* is complete only when the protagonist has reached a point

where he can act socially according to what he thinks. That is, of course, if it is possible to speak of completeness, as one of the great critical controversies surrounding the *Bildungsroman* has to do with the extent to which the ideal of *Bildung* is — or must be — reached, and more than sufficient evidence of this debate will surface during the analysis of the texts. Regardless of such considerations, the protagonist of the *Bildungsroman* — the *Bildungsheld*, as he will henceforth be called — must have a strong sense of inner determination, because he is building his own life in and through himself. That is his *Bildung*, an eclectic *Werdegang* with aspirations to totality; certainly not only the acknowledgement of a defined number of "life lessons", but rather a matter of self-cultivation.

As a genre, the *Bildungsroman* emerged during the last third of the eighteenth century, a period generally viewed as a golden age of German literature, in that it saw the beginnings of a well-defined German national culture and the birth of a national literary canon. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-6) is usually considered the prototype of the *Bildungsroman* genre, even though this prototype is not the earliest chronological example of the form. This should pose no critical problem, however. Critics like Susanne Howe and Weldon Thornton, for example, also consider that the prototype, in other words, the model that became all but synonymous with the

[3] J. B. Schneewind, 'Modern Moral Philosophy', in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 151

form, does not need to be the first example of it.[4] Bearing this in mind, it was nevertheless Christoph Martin Wieland, a German writer of the mid-eighteenth century, who planted the seeds of the genre with his novel of psychological formation, *Geschichte des Agathon* (1766-7).

The term '*Bildungsroman*' itself is frequently thought to have been coined by Wilhelm Dilthey in his *Das Leben Schleiermachers* (1870), yet it would be truer to say that Dilthey was responsible for the propagation of the term than for its invention. For him, it stood for a work that presented a regulated progression within the life of an individual, each of its stages having its own intrinsic value and serving at the same time as a basis for a higher stage. The goal was to reach an ideal of humanity, the full realisation of human potential. It was a strongly individualistic novel, with its emphasis on the uniqueness of the protagonist and the primacy of his private life and thoughts, these being at the same time representative of an age and culture. The term *Bildungsroman*, however, had surfaced much earlier: Karl von Morgenstern had used it in a lecture (called *Über den Geist und Zusammenhang einer Reihe philosophischer Romane*) given in 1810 at the Imperial University in Dorpat. He applied the term to a series of novels by Friedrich Maximilian Klinger. According to Morgenstern, the

[4] See, respectively, Susanne Howe's *Wilhelm Meister and his English Kinsmen: Apprentices to Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930) and Weldon Thornton's *The Antimodernism of Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

objective of the *Bildungsroman* was to encourage moral elevation and masculine strength of character.[5]

The *Bildungsroman* has been invested with a set of properties for some time, then, however general one might think that set to be, however it remains hard to outline the elusive concept of *Bildung* itself. The difficulties might be related to the problem of not having a suitable word to translate *Bildung*, not only in English but in other languages — like Portuguese, for instance —, but it could also be that they lie deeper, perhaps in the question whether such a genre can exist outside a German setting.

Given its characteristics, the term *Bildungsroman* indeed became an umbrella term that aimed to cover many a narrative dealing with the growth and development of a young individual. Even in German there sometimes seems to exist more than one word attached to the genre, as terms like *Erziehungsroman* and *Entwicklungsroman* are occasionally carelessly interchanged and intertwined with *Bildungsroman*. In English, however, the variety of definitions is much more impressive:

> The word *Bildungsroman* has been translated variously as apprenticeship novel, novel of formation, novel of individual development, novel of self-cultivation, novel of initiation, novel of socialization, novel of education, pedagogical novel, philosophical novel, psychological novel, novel of youth, and life novel.[6]

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[5] Fritz Martini, '*Bildungsroman*: Term and Theory', in Hardin (1991), p. 3

[6] Michael Minden, '*Bildungsroman*', in *Encyclopedia of the Novel*, ed. Paul Schellinger (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998), 1, 118. I will adopt the term 'self-cultivation' throughout because, in Carlyle's

It is quite a list, but that still does not make it easier to pick out the best label for the term. *Bildung* itself has more than one meaning, as can be seen, again, when one tries to render it into English. But the *Bildungsroman* is too short a blanket to cover all that is said to be a part of it. Hardin recognises that 'hardly any other term is applied more frequently to a novelistic form and scarcely any is used more imprecisely'.[7] The blanket, then, is invariably used to cover some of the characteristics of the genre, and consequently leaves many others exposed.

Several problems, of course, arise when trying to define genres, all leading to the question whether there is actually any point in genre criticism. The very definition of genre is, after all, particularly open to debate. Throughout the thesis, I will be using the term 'genre' in relation to the *Bildungsroman*, following the line of critics like Thornton. Looking at it as a genre, and also to simplify possible terminological questions, I am considering the *Bildungsroman* as a type of novel, not as a subgenre of a larger genre, such as the novel, because, as Alastair Fowler says, genres 'are best not regarded at all as classes, but [as] types'.[8] A difficulty of this kind of study is, nevertheless, the great instability of the terms that go to make it up.

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translation of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, that is the term that is used when Wilhelm first speaks about his *Bildung* endeavours. I must clarify, though, that this self-cultivation should not follow the connotations of how the term 'cultivation' is normally perceived, i.e. as acquisition of intellectual capital, but rather as eclectic individual development through the cultivation of human potential.

[7] Hardin (1991), p. x

[8] Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), p. 37

Almost organically, genres are born from previously existing ones, then grow and develop by acquiring different attributes. Appreciation of every genre must be open to the idiosyncratic variations in the individual talent of particular writers: it may be convenient to place literary works into little neat compartments, but one must — or is forced to — proceed with caution here. It is not an easy task to assign a set of attributes to a specific work of literature, and it is even less easy to make hard and fast rules out of these attributes, and then judge all future creation in the same line according to those rules. Categorisation does pose difficult questions: it is hard to extract the features that make a *Bildungsroman* from any given novel, and, if they indeed exist, then the critic might be putting the whole genre into a straitjacket of Houdini-like proportions. Very few novels, if any, apart from a clear-cut prototype, in case there is one, would fit. Moreover, much contemporary criticism tends to deny the validity of criticism of genre, in a 'general tendency away from ritually determined forms and syntagmatically prescribed genres, and towards looser and more flexible conventions'.[9]

Having said this, and whilst recognising the difficulties, I think a line still needs to be drawn somewhere, however flexible one might be when approaching it. Many current views might assume that all genres are flexible and entirely negotiable, yet there are always characteristics that are more important, some that may not be so significant, and some that certainly cannot be alienated. Otherwise,

[9] Ibid., p. 167

for example, it would be hard to recognise literary forms, like a poem. It has, for instance, a form, however this may differ from one poem to another. Still, this makes it distinguishable from, say, a short story, which usually has a completely different form, observes different guidelines, however they may differ, again, in different examples.

When dealing with a valid example of a literary genre, the critic is always prone to misconstrue those traits that are essential and normative, *formative*, even, and those that are not. It is up to her or him, in reader-response fashion, to acknowledge that a literary genre changes over time.[10] The original or the prototype can never be repeated, though its ideological content and underlying philosophy can, even if the critic is considering literary works of different eras. The boundaries must be allowed to stay flexible, not held hostage to any trivial single set of traits. Yet the boundaries cannot be so elastic as to make it virtually impossible to describe any literary work in solid, credible terms: 'On a more practical level, genre criticism is potentially valuable because it can direct our attention toward relevant issues and facilitate our asking appropriate questions about the individual works that exemplify the genre.'[11] I believe that a delicate

[10] Reader-response criticism is interested in the response of readers to texts, as well as in the ethical implications of those responses, which is why sometimes it is also called ethical criticism. It is an approach to literature which is based on the reader's active interaction, as it were, with the text, dealing with notions of empathy and consequently paying attention to many traditional, albeit vague, terms of literary analysis, such as beauty, emotion or catharsis, for instance. For more on this subject, see, just to mention two examples, Jane P. Tompkins (ed.), *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), or Wayne C. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1988). In this last work Booth describes this kind of criticism as an attempt 'to describe the encounters of a story-teller's ethos with that of the reader'. See p. 8.

[11] Thornton (1994), p. 66

balance must be found between conflicting ways of viewing genre criticism. A genre evolves, and it may even cross national boundaries, adapting itself to new conditions, but it cannot be forgotten that these will often also correspondingly adapt themselves to the genre.

1.1. The *Aufklärung* and the association of the *Bildungsroman* with German culture

> Ich wünschte, daß ich in das Wort Humanität alles fassen könnte, was ich bisher über die Menschen edler Bildung zur Vernunft und Freiheit, zu feinen Sinnen und Trieben, zur zartesten und stärksten Gesundheit, zur Erfüllung und Beherrschung der Erde gesagt habe.
>
> Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*

Bildung can be translated as 'education', but this would only be partially adequate. It can also mean 'shaping', 'form', 'formation', and 'forming', all of which give an idea of development, of creation. But the definition of *Bildung* is more complex than a mere etymological investigation of the word would suggest. During the German Enlightenment — the *Aufklärung* —, *Bildung* came to mean formation, not of external features, but of individuality, of personality as a whole: *Bildung* stood for cultivation, refinement and education according to what can be best described, despite the scope of the term, as humanist tenets. But never in a sense of an institutional, possibly narrow type of education.

Medieval German mystics had already employed the word *Bildung* in the sense of cleansing the soul of earthly impurities and forming it according to its

divine model. But in the eighteenth century, linked with the new concepts of the *Aufklärung*, the German reshaping of "enlightened" ideas that were circulating in Europe, *Bildung* gained new meanings, connoting education, cultivation of multiple faculties, and the enlightened man — similar to the protagonist of the *Bildungsroman* — had to embark on his own journey of self-cultivation. This drive for *Bildung* did not appear only as a result of outside influences, as the protagonist of the *Bildungsroman* often has to strive to forget what was bestowed upon him by formal education, and attempt to develop from the inside. Formation from within, the discovery and shaping of the self, is the truly important formation and, as Dennis F. Mahoney underlines, was a concept that had already been heard of in Germany:

> Contributing to this conception were the animistic views of nature developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by German alchemists such as Paracelsus and theosophists such as Jakob Böhme that were to survive in modified forms in such works as Leibniz's *Monadology* and Blumenbach's treatise on the *Bildungstrieb*, the drive for *Bildung*.[12]

Underlying these ideas is an inner drive towards *Bildung* not related to exterior occurrences, but the concept of *Bildung* is one of wholeness. As a humanist notion it comprises the idea of self-cultivation through the help of harmonious aesthetic, moral and rational values, which are the backbone of the educational ideals of the *Aufklärung*: only so would it be possible to achieve a fully humanist *Weltanschauung*. The *Aufklärung* was the emancipation of man,

[12] Dennis F. Mahoney, 'The Apprenticeship of the Reader: The *Bildungsroman* of the "Age of Goethe"', in Hardin (1991), p. 109

according to Immanuel Kant, from the petty condition he had deliberately fallen into:

> Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit. Unmündigkeit ist das Unvermögen, sich seines Verstandes ohne Leitung eines anderen zu bedienen. Selbstverschuldet ist diese Unmündigkeit, wenn die Ursache derselben nicht am Mangel des Verstandes, sondern der Entschließung und des Mutes liegt, sich seiner ohne Leitung eines anderen zu bedienen.[13]

In the same essay, Kant gave the *Aufklärung* a motto: *Sapere aude*!, a challenge to the individual, a call for the manifestation of his true intellectual, autonomous capacity.

Yet despite its intellectual foundation, the *Aufklärung* was a form of critique very much directed towards immediate reality, rather than towards the contemplation of a transcendent life as in medieval Scholasticism. The idea was that the individual could better himself through rational exercise, enlighten himself, and thus eliminate all forms of error, ignorance, blind passion and obscurantism, all sources of human degradation brought about by the inadequate use of reason. The instructional side of the movement is self-evident, and as the goal was to achieve some kind of salvation, as it were, in earthly life, it was also immensely ambitious and optimistic.

[13] Immanuel Kant, 'Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?', in *Immanuel Kants Werke: Schriften von 1783-1788*, ed. Artur Buchenau and Ernst Cassirer (Berlin: Cassirer, 1913), 4, 167. The translations of all quotations in German can be found in Appendix I.

It was through the work of the writers and thinkers of the *Aufklärung* that *Bildung* became one of the guiding lights of a German culture that was attempting to renew itself into a new Humanism, a *neue Humanität*, here meaning the development of human qualities, in all their forms, to the fullest extent. Humanism had lost much of its vigour since the *Quattrocento*, of course, yet it experienced a revival in Germany during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Strong humanist motifs are found in the thought of Lessing, Schiller, Hegel and, perhaps most of all, in the life and work of Goethe, whose extent of achievement and vision of existence came close to the ideal of the *uomo universale* promoted by the Italian *umanisti* of the fifteenth century. Goethe's fictional characters also frequently display a complex blend of humanist and idealistic optimism, and their chief attention is many times directed to the human self and to self-awareness (self-awareness, of course, is a prerequisite of *Bildung*, since the protagonist of the *Bildungsroman* has to know himself and then adopt a demeanour that will allow him to completely develop his human potential).

Wilhelm von Humboldt — who in the early nineteenth century actually inserted the ideal of *Bildung* into the educational theory and practice of post-*Aufklärung* Germany — thought that a successful *Bildung* would only be possible without state regulation, but the truth was that the state and its citizens would greatly benefit if the individual were allowed to have the necessary freedom to cultivate himself, as personal improvement would only enhance the

progress of the community as a whole.[14] Kant, for example, considered that a *gebildeter Mensch*, in this context meaning a self-cultivated individual, is but fulfilling his nature, and by doing so is helping the species to which s/he belongs, even if unknowingly; it is not doing so that was seen as intolerable: '[Kant] argues that systematic failure to develop one's own potential amounts to disrespect for humanity.'[15] The particular attention paid to the relation between the individual and the community, society, the state, is therefore important, in the light of the connection between the *Bildungsroman* and the culture of its time, with its thriving bourgeoisie, and reveals that the *Bildungsroman* is a genre deeply embedded in the historical context of its emergence.

The optimism of the *Bildungsroman* and the individual improvement of its protagonist are related to the *Aufklärung*'s idea that moral progress can be achieved through literature: somehow following the beliefs of Morgenstern, the *Bildungsroman* was also supposed to foster social improvement. In general, it was thought that the novel should instil ethical and moral values; consequently it became a major channel of the *Aufklärung*'s endeavour to promote general education. Furthermore, the importance of the novel — especially of the *Bildungsroman*, that intrinsically German type — in creating some kind of cohesion in the so-called educated public of the time in Germany is also undeniable.

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[14] See Minden, in Schellinger (1998), 1, 119 and Mahoney, in Hardin (1991), p. 109f.
[15] Onora O'Neill, 'Kantian Ethics', in Singer (1993), p. 179

The *Aufklärung*, however, was a drive towards reason that could sometimes be too one-sided, and *Bildung* was meant to affect the entire human being, mind, body and soul. The *Bildungsheld* could not become a sedentary and isolated thinker; he had necessarily to be a participant in life. Action without insight was thought to be aimless and misguided, but insight without action was rejected as imperfect and unilateral: there should be tension, friction, between reflection and action, and out of this clash a fine balance between them should arise, a balance born not out of compromise, but of totality.

Consonant with the broader concept of *Bildung* is the notion that the intellectual element is important for the development of man, but also the volitional and moral elements, which can only take more definite shape when in active relationship with the world, with others. The *Bildungsheld* shows that he has attained his goals by being capable of moral and ethical choice, by balancing his inwardness with the notion that the world exists outside his subjectivity. As Michael Minden notes, the *Bildungsroman*'s premise is based upon the belief 'that individuals are capable of being morally formed, of unfolding from within according to regularities proper to them'.[16] The protagonist, then, must bear responsibility for his relations to others and not just stay egotistically consumed with his own self. This is a feature of the anti-*Bildungsroman* that was to appear

[16] Michael Minden, 'Mann's literary techniques', in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann*, ed. Ritchie Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 52

later, yet in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, for instance, the objectivation of the self is of the utmost importance for the protagonist's process of self-cultivation.

In the *Bildungsroman*, and as in Kantian ethics, the 'commitment to acting morally in the world depends on assuming (postulating, hoping) that the natural order is not wholly incompatible with moral intentions'.[17] As a result, the *Bildungsroman* affirms the belief in an ultimate meaning in the relation between self and society, between the self and the world. The thinkers of the *Aufklärung*, after all, thought that order could be bestowed upon the universe by man's faculties. Art could in the same way help to give meaning to the world, could promote moral and social progress, in short, could ensure human happiness. This was also the aim of literature; in this case, through the *Bildungsroman*.

The view of the *Bildungsroman* as some sort of national design has much to do with the relation between these ideas and the *Bildungsroman*'s innate optimism, as it was thought that if moral will was the chief characteristic of the self, it would also be the activating principle of the world. The *Bildungsroman* concerns itself with the generality of a culture, in this case a German culture strongly shaped by the *Aufklärung*. Just as Wilhelm Meister wanted to change the German mind through the theatre, so the *Bildungsroman* was meant to improve the potentialities of a country that, despite its intellectual vigour, was backward and fragmented in political and cultural terms, and was still looking for an

[17] O'Neill, in Singer (1993), p. 181

identity. 'Deutschland', as Goethe asks in his *Xenien* of 1796, 'aber wo liegt es?'[18]

This particular intent leads to the conjecture that, in the *Bildungsroman*, it is also the reader who is being exposed to the wholeness of *Bildung*. Such an idea, which began with the earliest scholarship on the *Bildungsroman*, continued right up until the *Bildungsromane* of the twentieth century, like Thomas Mann's. Morgenstern, one of the first academics who looked into the ideal of *Bildung*, considered, after all, that the *Bildungsroman* cultivated the reader more than any other kind of novel, and it did so through the depiction of the formation of the protagonist.[19] It all proceeds from a desirable identification of the reader with the protagonist: just as in reader-response criticism, the literary work is assessed by the effect it has upon the reader. And, as in ethical criticism, the reader must help to define the genre, in what eventually becomes a relation of interdependence.

The role of the narrator is also very important for the reader's positioning towards the novel, especially because of the narrator's closeness to the mind of the *Bildungsheld*: in the case of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and Mann's *Der Zauberberg*, for instance, it is sometimes even hard to distinguish which voice is leading the endless digressions which occur in both novels (it could even be argued that it is not only the voice of the narrator, but of the author

[18] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, '*Xenien*', in *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens: Wirkungen der Französichen Revolution 1791-1797*, ed. Reiner Wild (Munich: Hanser, 1988), 4.1, 787
[19] Martini, in Hardin (1991), p. 18.

himself). Still, the aspect of self-awareness emphasised by the narrator is of even more consequence than the events experienced by the protagonist. The narrative voice does not lead the protagonist towards a certain set of values or rules, as in the *Erziehungsroman*, but the narrator certainly has some ideals in mind, some conclusions/goals that it would like to see reached. And even if the *Bildungsheld* does not attain all of those goals, he must at least glimpse them, he must try to achieve completeness. And, consequently, the reader should likewise benefit from the simultaneously practical and philosophical stances adopted by the narrator. Just as it is for the *Bildungsheld*, the most important thing is not schoolbook learning, but rather a "learning" with something alchemical to it: it is the shaping of the gold inside of man, the noumenon reachable by the individual who attempts his own self-cultivation.

The *Bildungsroman*, then, is closely linked to its life and times, mirroring the flow of the thoughts and the desires of a *Zeitgeist*. The spiritual mould and the cultural structure of the time influence to a great extent the *Bildungsideal* and the path and goals of the *Bildungsheld*. Yet here another problem of the concept of *Bildung* arises, because *Bildung* can also be considered as a collective name for the cultural and spiritual values of a certain people in a certain time, as Hardin says: 'As can be seen, the problem is not merely one of translation from one language to another; rather, it has also to do with the fact that *Bildung* is a

slippery concept, more so now than formerly, one that is bound to our interpretation of cultural values.'[20] Again, it is up to the reader to decide.

One can see that the problem of accurate rendition of the term is bound to keep on surfacing, as no translation can correctly render a word that is so strongly fused with cultural notions: as was mentioned before, *Bildung* means 'formation', yet it also strongly implies the notion of 'forming', a notion that involves a sense of dynamic continuity that is peculiarly German. The *Bildungsroman* is, after all, a novel of *werden*, not of *sein*, it is a *Werdegang* in which what has been formed, what has been created, is important, but also what is in the process of being created, and this is 'a meaning that is not rendered in the usual English translations'.[21] Nietzsche, too, said that the German 'is' not, he is rather 'becoming', and by saying this he followed in the footsteps of Goethe:

> Der Deutsche hat für den Complex des Daseins eines wirklichen Wesens das Wort Gestalt. Er abstrahiert bei diesem Ausdruck von dem Beweglichen, er nimmt an, daß ein zusammengehöriges festgestellt, abgeschlossen und in seinem Charakter fixiert sei. Betrachten wir aber alle Gestalten, besonders die organischen, so finden wir, daß nirgend ein Bestehendes, nirgend ein Ruhendes, ein Abgeschlossenes vorkommt, sondern daß vielmehr alles in einer steten Bewegung schwanke. Daher unsere Sprache das Wort Bildung sowohl von dem Hervorgebrachten als von dem Hervorgebrachtwerdenden gehörig genug zu brauchen pflegt.[22]

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[20] Ibid., p. xii
[21] Ibid., p. xi
[22] Goethe, *Zur Naturwissenschaft überhaupt, besonders zur Morphologie*, in *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens*, ed. Hans J. Becker et al. (Munich: Hanser, 1989), 12, 13. See also Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Coli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich, Berlin, New York: Deutscher Taschenbuch/de Gruyter, 1988), 5, 185.

Thus the *Bildungsheld* must strive to form his own self until he has reached a satisfactory degree of completion, in a deliberate process of individual improvement. And because optimism is a feature of the *Bildungsroman* genre, this inner process of improvement must continue to be striven for, even if the protagonist has difficulty adapting it to the world. Since he can only act morally when he achieves what Idealism defined as the clarification of consciousness, this process may be, in the end, a long-lasting one.

1.2. The ideal of *Bildung* fulfilled: the influence of Pietism and the dialogue between inner self and world

> Reason averts mistakes but does not act, whereas action leads to mistakes but none the less acts.
>
> Antonio Gramsci

The rendering of the word *Bildung* into English is a difficult task, as no one word quite corresponds to it. But even among Germanists there is a surprising disagreement regarding the whole question of the *Bildungsroman*, if it really is possible to speak of a specific type of novel bearing that name. Various scholars and critics have tried to clarify the term in recent years, and a few have cast a doubt upon the whole notion of the *Bildungsroman*. In *Reflection and Action*, a 1991 compilation of essays about the genre, for example, only Martin Swales appears to defend the existence of the genre. Jeffrey L. Sammons is suspicious of it, speaking of a phantom genre. Hartmut Steinecke, perplexed by the narrowness of the genre's definitions, prefers to refer to all novels in the tradition of Wilhelm Meister as *Individualromane*. Fritz Martini considers it

impossible to isolate the *Bildungsroman* as a specific literary genre with formal principles, regarding it as an historical form deriving from specific historical conditions and from a certain *Weltanschauung*, and this is also the inference of James Hardin, who has already been quoted above. For Hardin, it cannot be proven that any great German novelist of the nineteenth century was consciously using his novels as statements about the cultural values of his time.[23]

The term *Bildungsroman* may well be exhausted, as art in the twentieth century somehow abandoned optimism. Despots and murderers listen to Bach and read Goethe, so art does not serve, as was thought, to refine human character. Time is not regarded as *summum bonum* any more; it is rather pregnant with both good and evil, lacking an affirmative and positive value. The chief intent of art may be to attack, to undermine, culture and society, indeed, to do so in an anti-humanist kind of way. It may just be possible that the favourable relation that the *Bildungsroman* established between the individual and culture has changed too much, leaving nothing but scepticism and cynicism in its wake. Nevertheless, to understand why the *Bildungsroman* must be effectively seen and understood as a consummate literary genre, one has to carefully examine its "Germanness".

[23] For all these viewpoints, see Hardin (1991). None the less, one must bear in mind that Goethe actually developed his own definition of *Bildung*. See *Goethe-Handbuch: Personen, Sachen, Begriffe A-K*, eds Hans-Dietrich Dahnke and Regine Otto (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 1998), 4.1, 130f.

According to the new cultural "guidelines" of the century that has just passed, the genre should indeed have been dead and buried. It would not be hard to sustain this view of things, as even Dilthey, who looked exhaustively into the *Bildungsroman*, considered it to be merely an historical phenomenon whose time had passed, a genre lost with the humanist mood of an epoch.[24] This shows exactly how challenging the *Bildungsroman* is, more so if one looks at modern novels — here meaning novels of the twentieth century. Modern novels are products of the collapse of old ethical, religious and philosophical certainties, 'unable to provide more', as Hardin puts it, 'than open-ended intimations of what might supplant post-Nietzschean nihilism. In general, the modern novel is open-ended, noncommittal, relativistic'.[25]

In the novel that became its prototype and in other earlier examples, the *Bildungsroman* was set in a universe that was supposed to make sense, and one can affirm that it is difficult to make the same sense of twentieth-century existence. Still, one thing in the *Bildungsroman* remains the same, a "uniqueness", something that gives actual substance and — why not say it? — prestige to the whole genre, and that is its peculiar German character. Dilthey may have wanted to negate existence to future *Bildungsromane*, yet that did not prevent many modern novelists — the likes of Hermann Hesse (of whom it can be said that almost all of his novels fit the genre) and Thomas Mann — from

[24] Hardin (1991), p. xiv
[25] Ibid., p. xxi

being aware of the genre's German specificity, thus helping it to remain dynamic. Mann, discussing *Bildung* and the *Bildungsroman*, stated not without a certain pride how they ought to be regarded:

> 'Bildung' ist ein spezifisch deutscher Begriff; er stammt von Goethe, von ihm hat er den plastisch-künstlerischen Charakter, den Sinn der Freiheit, Kultur und Lebensandacht erhalten, [...] dieser Begriff [ist] in Deutschland zum erzieherischen Prinzip erhoben worden wie bei keinem anderen Volk.[26]

Mann considered the *Bildungsroman* the rendering inwards of the novel of adventures and this was, according to him, the distinctive feature of its "Germanness".[27] The genre's confessional stance was the most meaningful German contribution to the novel of the nineteenth century and I believe this is a characteristic that makes the *Bildungsroman* unique, setting it apart from subsequent manifestations of similar types of novels in other countries. This will be examined in detail below — in chapters two and three —, with reference to several novels, as it will prove useful to establish a comparison between the *Bildungsroman* and variations of it abroad, in American literature, for instance. This will highlight some of the exclusive, idiosyncratic German attributes of the genre.

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[26] Mann, 'Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen', in *Gesammelte Werke: Reden und Aufsätze*, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1960), 12, 505

[27] See Martin Swales, *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 23.

In his influential *Versuch über den Roman* (1774), Friedrich von Blanckenburg developed the theory of the *Innerlichkeitsroman*, a view of the novel that aims directly at the inwardness of its protagonist. The novel is evaluated, as Fritz Martini says, 'on the basis of the extent to which it portrays the inner soul, the inner history of the person portrayed'.[28] Martini further considers that this notion had great consequences — and rather controversial ones — in terms of subsequent literary theory and practice in Germany.

Since the *Versuch über den Roman*, any German novel which wants to be taken seriously must adhere to the notion that the event itself could never be the most important; what should be of greater significance was the inner situation of the protagonists.[29] It has become a necessity. As Blanckenburg himself said, the writer, the *Dichter*, must have the power to clarify the inner self of the person involved in his work, and teach him how to know himself, or otherwise he is a *Dichter* of little talent. It is not very far away from the opinion of Goethe, who considered that, whatever the *Dichter* did, he was only bringing to light the individual self. And Dilthey also emphasised the private aspects of the novel.[30]

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[28] Martini, in Hardin (1991), p. 21

[29] Loc. cit.

[30] See Martini, p. 21 and Hartmut Steinecke, 'The Novel and the Individual: The Significance of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* in the debate about the *Bildungsroman*', ibid., p. 93. Swales also speaks of this state of affairs and coins it the 'German reverence for inwardness', saying that this particular trait is the main reason why English readers usually feel alienated from German literature (see Swales, 'Irony and the Novel: Reflections on the German *Bildungsroman*', ibid., pp. 62 and 52). As if to prove this point, one of the copies of *Der Nachsommer* that I used for this thesis only last year had not left the University library since 1983.

It is very possible that this inward "inclination" has a Pietist background, in the mystical sermon tradition, the revealing of the *schöne Seele*. *Pietismus* was a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century movement that derived from Lutheranism. It emphasised personal faith, but it soon expanded its scope to include social and educational concerns. The expression of feeling and creativity was one of its most significant features, and stood against the institutionalised rigidity of Lutheran rules. Pietism also had literary representations, which can be seen in the proliferation of confessional literature — in the form of diaries, autobiographies, epistolary novels — and of sentimental poetry of introspective profundity at the time. The *Bildungsroman*, then, being somehow an 'epic of inwardness', fits nicely into this mould.[31] The external order, it seems, is of no consequence.

Stressing sensitivity, *Empfindlichkeit*, Pietism could be seen, to some extent, as being a reaction against the *Aufklärung*, in particular the *Aufklärung*'s emphasis on reason. Nevertheless, Pietism is more of a complement to the *Aufklärung*, aspiring to achieve a perfect synthesis of human nature. The *Aufklärung* carried through the independence of thought, the ability to face life and the world without resorting to dogmatism imposed from the outside; Pietism, having in common with the *Aufklärung* the dismissal of orthodoxy and the promotion of tolerance, complemented it with affective expression, intuition, with the flights of the imagination, which were seen as faculties as legitimate in man as his rational potential.

[31] Michael Beddow's designation, as mentioned in Swales (1978), p. 29.

As an introspective novel, the *Bildungsroman* has roots, to some extent, in Pietism. It has a strong philosophical, subjective side to it, becoming highly self-reflective, so the *Bildungsprozeß* that the protagonist undergoes cannot merely be the gathering of experience, 'not merely maturation in the form of fictional biography'; there is too strong an emphasis on evolutionary change within the self for that, and that is why Sammons calls *Bildung*, quite rightly, a 'teleology of individuality'.[32] The *Bildungsroman* sometimes tends to dissolve a life chronology into some providential scenario of symbolic patterns and recurrences, stopping the course of time and space: 'It can at times come perilously close to espousing what J. P. Stern called "a chimerical freedom — as though somehow it were possible *not* to enter the river of experience that flows all one way".'[33]

Sometimes the characters and the events of *Bildungsromane* seem to exist or to take place not for themselves, but for their ability to strike a chord within the protagonist, in an almost alchemical procedure of showing the gold he has inside. It is certainly because of this that in Mann's *Der Zauberberg*, for example, *Bildung* is spoken of in terms of hermeticism. All that surrounds the *Bildungsheld* seems frequently to be just part of a scenery, a mere décor for his benefit.

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[32] Sammons, 'The *Bildungsroman* for Non-Specialists: An Attempt at a Clarification', in Hardin (1991), p. 41
[33] Swales, ibid., p. 52

Schopenhauer, for example, stressed that the novelist could only describe anything meaningful with the least possible use of outer events. Inner life had to come into the foreground: 'Ein *Roman* wird desto höherer und edlerer Art seyn, je mehr *inneres* und je weniger *äußeres* Leben er darstellt.'[34] Reality is almost held to be inimical to *Geist*, to the spirit, so it must be transformed as an outward enactment of the latter. Reality, the world, events, and deeds, are neglected, all that matters is the personal sphere. In fact, even society has to be forgotten. Strangely — or maybe not —, the majority of *Bildungsromane* take place not in the midst of society, but in smaller, private groups living outside society, even with a strong degree of seclusion. This is as true for *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as it is for *Der Zauberberg*.

These secluded places and the characters who inhabit them are certainly a mirror of society, and the social world does enter into the *Bildungsroman*, of course. But it is but one aspect of a larger whole. Social issues per se are not important, or interesting enough, for the *Bildungsroman*, and the *Bildungsheld*, after all, faces a lasting struggle against the narrowness of what the social world can offer him. So society is subordinate to the internal life, as much as everything else: 'Der Schwerpunkt [des *Bildungsromans*] liegt eindeutig auf dem Ablauf der inneren Entwicklung des Helden, und die äusseren Umstände und die Handlung spielen eine geringere Rolle. [...] Eine Form, die das äussere Geschehen fast

[34] Quoted in Steinecke, ibid., p. 88

ganz vernachlässigt.'[35] Not society, but the individual and his *Bildungsprozeß* are what matters more to the novel.

This conflict between "inner potentiality" and "practical actuality" is by no means a property of the *Bildungsroman* of German origin alone. The troubles of a youth with the "real world" are well documented in almost every genre of every literature. Swales points to this, as he believes the conflict between individual aspirations and practical obstacles is as much a theme of the *Bildungsroman* as, say, of the Victorian novel. But he still stresses the differences, noting again what seems to rest like an archetype in the German frame of mind, that conflict between potentiality and actuality:

> Within the framework of literary realism, this conflict finds palpable, outward enactment [...]; whereas in the German novel tradition, the tension between *Nebeneinander* and *Nacheinander* is essentially a debate about the coordinates of human cognition, and the issues raised [...] are embedded in the narrator's (and reader's) capacity for reflectivity.[36]

[35] Hans Wagner, *Der Englische Bildungsroman bis in die Zeit des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Bern: Francke, 1951), p. 14f

[36] Swales, in Hardin (1991), p. 66f. Swales calls the actuality of the plot the *Nacheinander*, whilst the *Nebeneinander* stands for the potentialities within the self, i.e. there is a tension between objective-exterior and subjective-inner factors. See p. 51f.

2. 'In another country': *Bildung or* initiation?

> Let us look at this American artist first. How did he ever get to America, to start with? Why isn't he a European still, like his father before him?
> D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*

Nowadays, perhaps nobody in her/his right mind would identify the *Bildungsroman* exclusively with Germany. Still, I would like at least to keep the term circumscribed within certain ideological limits. The ideas behind the genre are in no sense a German invention; they are a reshaping of ideas that were flowing across Europe, but they were given a particular German form by German culture. It is true that, in the early eighteenth century, Germany was not a political and cultural entity in its own right, let alone a match for Britain or France (France was, actually, the dominant source for models, a fact which illustrated German provincialism, as the language of culture as well as of social taste and manners was French). Yet by the end of the century a new identity was emerging, several German writers had been canonised, and the *Bildungsroman* was one of the preferred means of literary expression in prose.

It may no longer be possible to keep the genre within its historical limits, as new "*Bildungsromane*" seem to be published every year, but what should define such novels are the ideas behind them. Mann's *Der Zauberberg*, for example, is a twentieth-century *Bildungsroman*. It is a parody of the genre, working as a renewal of it, but it sticks to the original ideological frame of the *Bildungsroman*. The same can be said of Hesse's *Das Glasperlenspiel*. Bearing

in mind the characteristics of the genre, it can be said that what is generally lacking in the modern *Bildungsroman* is the protagonist's final accommodation to society. The modern novel may be disenchanted with the world, and show little optimism, yet the two novels I have just mentioned as examples follow the tenets of the first *Bildungsromane* in a way that is hard to detect in non-German examples.

In American literature, for instance, the implications of external forces upon the protagonist usually assume a greater significance, and that shifts the balance of importance from German *Innerlichkeit*. For the German idealist mind, the world is secondary. And the *Bildungsroman* is idealistic. It is for that reason that many critics, whilst not considering the *Bildungsroman* exclusively German, separate the German exemplars from those of other countries. The reason for this is that the German "version" is sometimes described as utopian, and the others are not, they lack the ideal dimension of the *Bildungsroman*.[37]

As Fowler points out, there can never be anything like direct equivalence between genres in different literary traditions. Even acknowledging the possibility of transplantation and translation of genres, he none the less notes the difficulty which 'perpetually reminds one of cultural differences'.[38] One might

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[37] See, for example, Minden, in Schellinger (1998), 1, 122.
[38] Fowler (1982), p. 134

speak of a family resemblance between diverse genres, as Fowler puts it, but the basis of similarity lies always in literary tradition.

In American literature, none the less, the term '*Bildungsroman*' is used freely, perhaps too freely, whenever the critical discussion centres on a novel that presents a process of growth and development of a young protagonist, frequently with the minimal understanding of how the term *Bildung* is used in its German context. As Vanderwerken points out, the term *Bildungsroman* has indeed become a catch-all label to describe any such work of fiction (and not only fiction, it appears).

But if Vanderwerken, as seen, speaks in somewhat ironic terms of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (1788) being considered a *Bildungsroman*, it is nevertheless true that — despite the fundamental distinctions between the genre of autobiography and the *Bildungsroman* — Franklin's work sometimes is: Joke Kardux calls it in fact one of the early American examples of the genre.[39]

[39] See Joke Kardux, 'The Politics of Genre, Gender, and Canon-Formation: The Early American *Bildungsroman* and its Subversions', in *Rewriting the Dream: Reflections on the Changing American Literary Canon*, ed. W. M. Verhoeven (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1992), p. 177. Regarding this issue, and as Minden notes, the autobiography is a form of self-revelation and not of self-development like the *Bildungsroman*. Minden also calls the reader's attention to the distance between the narrator and the protagonist that is a feature of the *Bildungsroman*. See Minden, in Schellinger (1998), 1, 122. Furthermore, and unlike what happens in the *Bildungsroman*, one of the traits of Franklin's persona is his distrust of reason. And even more curious is the fact that, though the autobiography was only published in full in 1867, it was written before Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, which came to be seen as setting the standards of the *Bildungsroman* genre.

Yet I think that the American "counterpart" of the *Bildungsroman* is more aptly called 'narrative of initiation'.[40]

This said, there have been many American novels which have been treated as *Bildungsromane*, and that I could have chosen to look at: naming but a few by better-known authors, and just in the nineteenth century, the list could include James Fenimore Cooper's *Deerslayer* (1841), Melville's *Redburn* (1849), Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* (1860), Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1869), Henry James' *What Maisie Knew* (1897), and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900).

The term *Bildungsroman* has been applied to these novels, as it has been to many others. It has gained a life of its own, almost, and has become an inclusive term in the United States, whereas in Germany its boundaries are more tightly preserved. In American criticism, *Bildungsroman* has become a convenient synonym for any novel dealing with the development of a young protagonist.

The inclusion of some texts in an American canon cannot help but cause a certain perplexity. Geta LeSeur, for example, considers that one of the premier examples of the *Bildungsroman* in nineteenth-century American fiction is *The*

[40] I refer to the American examples considered in this thesis as 'narratives of initiation' and not as 'novels of initiation' for the sake of clarity, as some of the texts that I am looking at are not novels but short-story sequences.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, a novel that begins and ends in the early adolescence of the protagonist. Furthermore, LeSeur uses the term when referring to portraits of childhood mainly, yet traditionally, the *Bildungsroman* extends beyond childhood and adolescence.[41] The American version seems to have no distinct age restrictions, then.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, ever-present when the topic of the *Bildungsroman* in America is brought up — Mark Twain's novel enjoys an almost prototypical status, similar to the one *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* has in German literature — is also mentioned by another critic, Gunilla Theander Kester, who also demonstrates a peculiar notion of what *Bildung* is (or at least how it is normally seen) by maintaining that novels as diverse as Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851), Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) and William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) should be considered *Bildungsromane*.[42]

More often than not, the choice of examples seems careless and the definitions of the genre are vague, not taking into consideration the characteristics of the *Bildungsroman:* 'Take, for example, the consistent strain in

[41] See Geta LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness: The Black Bildungsroman* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1995), p. 19f.

[42] Gunilla Theander Kester, *Writing the Subject: Bildung and the African-American Text* (New York: Lang, 1995), p. 9. Regarding *A Farewell to Arms*, Kester is not alone. Evelyn Cobley, who at one stage likens the '*Bildungsroman* paradigm' — as she calls it — to a 'notion of an initiatory passage through the night', considers that the reading of Hemingway's novel as a *Bildungsroman* is 'obvious', as this writer himself is said to have considered introducing the term 'education' in the title. Yet the novel Hemingway aspired to "imitate" was Gustave Flaubert's *L'Education Sentimentale* (1869). See Cobley, *Representing*

U.S. literature of masculine *Bildungsroman* — the ascension to the exalted status of manhood, under the tutelage of knowledgeable elders, with the fear of failure always lurking in the background.'[43] Anything goes: as long as a young protagonist is involved, any other attribute can be added to the genre, it seems. Nevertheless, and quite revealingly, Gilmore proceeds to say that the finest example of this "consistent strain" is Ernest Hemingway's *The Nick Adams Stories*, which, of course, is not even a *Roman*, a novel.

The term *Bildungsroman* is often used in a slipshod way, then, which shows little regard for its literary-historical origins, and this fact leads one to speculate on the possible truth behind the words of William C. Spengemann about American literary criticism: 'Little wonder that the study of American Literature has a reputation, among historians and critics alike, for theoretical incoherence, methodological laxity, and unrestrained generalization.'[44] For the most part, I believe this is not the case, so it is important to clarify the role of the *Bildungsroman* in American literature, that is to say, if there is or if there should be a need for an American version of it.

A *Bildungsroman* is not merely a tale about the development of a young character and what happens to him during that process — it is rather about *why*

War: Form and Ideology in First World War Narratives (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 122 and 170.

[43] David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 18f

[44] William C. Spengemann, 'American Writers and English Literature', *ELH*, 52 (1985), 215

and how the process takes place. Works of fiction dealing with the maturation of young characters are fairly common in the literature of any given country, each having distinctive traits of its own, so a term as *Bildungsroman* should not be used in critical seriousness as a catch-all label. This should happen too in the case of the American novel. Hardin even dubs this easy employment of the term a 'malady':

> American literary criticism has in general failed to inform itself about the nature of a type of novel [the *Bildungsroman*] more talked about than understood. [...] The imprecise use of the word to categorize virtually any book that describes, even in the most far-fetched way, a protagonist's formative years. It would not be difficult to cite dozens of passages in which the term is used in a careless, cavalier, or simply naive and confused way.[45]

If the American novel of initiation shares some traits with the *Bildungsroman*, this should be seen in terms of the universal themes attached to the growth of a young protagonist, such as, for instance, the disagreement with the ways of the world; the temporary (or not) journey away from familiar surroundings and into the unknown; the emphasis on self-awareness. A critical position of this kind allows for the particular characteristics of each literary tradition to be emphasised.

Howe, for instance, when analysing English novels that she believes come close to the *Bildungsroman*, says that the themes of the novel of development and formation of a young protagonist can in no sense be seen as German

[45] Hardin (1991), pp. ix-x

discoveries, yet she recognises that the *Bildungsroman* appears as a consequence of the distinctive social and cultural features of eighteenth-century Germany. Thus Howe quite wisely confines her work on English equivalents of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* — novels of apprenticeship, as she calls them — to works by authors familiar with German literature, either at first hand or through Carlyle's influential translation of Goethe's novel.[46]

The *Bildungsroman*'s stress on the inner tensions of the self appears in stark contrast to the external conflict between the social and the personal that is presented in the English novel of apprenticeship. By all accounts, this is also mostly the case with the American novel. LeSeur, who as seen before postulates the existence of an American *Bildungsroman*, unintentionally ends up estranging it from most definitions of the genre by saying that, in the United States, 'the form becomes social documentary'.[47] Of the German novel of ideas there is little trace.

I say this because the *Bildungsroman* is a (sometimes agonizingly monolithic, if truth be told) novel of ideas, ideas that should facilitate the path to *Bildung*, and which are a quintessential part of the genre. They can be an organic

[46] See Howe (1930). Some of the arguments used by critics such as Howe, Swales or Sammons to distinguish between the *Bildungsroman* of German origin and possible manifestations of it in English literature are potentially helpful — without ever losing sight of the many differences, obviously — when it comes to separate the *Bildungsroman* from the narrative of initiation, as are the obvious links between English and American literature. Similarities between comparative studies that include examples from these two literatures with the *Bildungsroman* should not be seen as wholly tangential, then.

[47] LeSeur (1995), p. 12. The predominance of inner factors can nevertheless be said to play a part in some of Herman Melville's works usually considered as *Bildungsromane*, for instance.

part of the structure, as they are in the prototype *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, where the notion of individual culture consciously pursued by Wilhelm is a thread of the whole novel. Furthermore, and remaining with this example, one can say that most of Goethe's novel is not occupied with action or with advances in the plot, but with conversation, intellectual exchange, discussion and debate. These are predominant, and plot is secondary. In *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, for instance, advances in the plot are taken care of rather hastily at times, with some narrative twists almost depending on "*deus ex machina* events".

It must be said in truth that the narrative of initiation is frequently suspicious of ideas, following a certain American tradition of anti-intellectualism. What is more, the whole concept of characters discussing ideas, or "worse", being subservient to ideas, is often not even considered, and certainly, at least in the examples of narratives of initiation analysed in this thesis, never developed. Hemingway has the following — and quite revealing — opinion on this matter: 'For a writer to put his own intellectual musings, which he might sell for a low price as essays, into the mouths of artificially constructed characters which are more remunerative when issued as people in a novel is good economics, perhaps, but does not make literature.'[48] As *The Nick Adams Stories*, with their several exemplary American themes, will be extensively scrutinised further on, this is an idea which is important to bear in mind.

[48] Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon* (St Albans: Triad/Panther Books, 1977), p. 170

The American narrative of initiation is, in point of fact, more concerned with plot, it has a greater closeness to events and to the actuality of the hero, so to speak, to the situations he is struggling with. There is not the same concern, as in the *Bildungsroman*, with the portrayal of self-cultivation. The *Bildungsroman* places a great stress on inner operations, while the narrative of initiation is concerned with the shock in the confrontation between individual and world. This is a major point of discrepancy between the *Bildungsroman* and the narrative of initiation: much more so than the *Bildungsroman*, the narrative of initiation is very much concerned with social, positivistic, problems and constraints, with the "real" forces of the world that impinge upon the protagonist. The narrative of initiation is an all-out criticism of that world, which is why the American initiates are in the thick of things, whereas the German *Bildungshelden* are always somehow isolated, not actively engaged in the world. And this, too, has a reason.

The *Bildungsroman* had always been, since its beginnings, an eminently bourgeois phenomenon. There is no doubting that fact. The German bourgeoisie was excluded from political activity, and the channels of class mobility were barred. That might have caused the *Flucht nach innen*, as bourgeois writers tried to construct their collective identity and gain self-assurance in the profession of letters: at most, they could think and write independently; they could not *act* independently. As mentioned before, seriousness and value were equated with inwardness in German bourgeois culture, so the inward realm of *Geist* could be a

starting point from which the narrowness and inaccessibility of the practical world could be transcended. It almost anticipated what Existentialists would later call 'facticity', in an attempt to describe the limiting factor in actual existence.[49] One of the main aspects to observe when considering possible translations of the *Bildungsroman* to other countries is the subjective tone of the genre, and the looking inwards from its protagonist and consequent marginalising of social aspects. As Reed notes: 'Critics in their turn continued to dismiss any less "poetic" subject — which included most of what English, French and Russian novelists normally treated — as somehow inferior, as mere "Literatur", not "Dichtung".'[50] And this is a characteristic of the novels in the German language that American examples also seem for the most part to lack.

The American narrative of initiation documents the concrete societal and psychological constraints upon a certain young protagonist, yet in the *Bildungsroman*, the problems lie within the realm of human nature itself and therefore are not liable to realistic treatment: 'Instead of a suspenseful story or the extensive depiction of social conditions, the German *Bildungsroman* concentrates on introspective analyses of the inner life of the protagonist laden with philosophical depth and metaphysical seriousness.'[51]

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[49] R.-M. Albérès, *L'Aventure Intellectuelle du XXe Siècle: Panorama des Littératures Européennes 1900-1970*, 4th ed. (Paris: Albin Michel, 1969), p. 207. For the existentialist, the individual is only truly her or himself as a unique, separated person, and not when s/he is absorbed into the world of things, into the social world, where s/he becomes a constructed character.
[50] Reed (1980), p. 118
[51] Mahoney, in Hardin (1991), p. 99

This is, in essence, how Thomas Mann and many other German writers viewed the *Bildungsroman*. Whenever he defined it, Mann always made reference to things such as its inwardness, and the subjectivity of the things of the mind, not of the things of the world: inwardness is the true source of distinction for the German mind.[52] And if one once again recalls the Pietist influence on this genre, the Pietist does not see his faith as militant; it is not directed towards the world, as the watchword of Pietism is *Entsagung*, renunciation: what is needed is to look inside. The deep introspection of the *Bildungsroman* is not found in the narrative of initiation, and in the *Bildungsroman*, furthermore, from *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* to *Der Zauberberg*, didactic and aesthetic digressions break up the course of the narrative action at will, in a manner completely alien to much American literature.

Bearing in mind the universal themes of novels dealing with young protagonists that account for the similarities between American examples and the *Bildungsroman*, what the American narrative of initiation also does not possess are the ontological concerns of the former. Swales certainly thinks that this is true for the British novel, and it is also true in the case of much American fiction, which does not share either the *Bildungsroman*'s tradition of exercise of reason that stems from the traditions of the *Aufklärung*, or its attention to the self-reflexive inner development of the protagonist.[53] Concerns with personality and

[52] See Swales (1978), pp. 159 and 151.
[53] Ibid., p. 34f

humanity are conspicuously absent; in short, the enquiry into the problems of human formation takes a completely different path.

The American initiate learns from his mistakes, but he is seldom reflective enough to consider the wider implications of what has happened to her/him. The *Bildungsheld* acts ethically only after the inner realisation of his own endowments, because the forces opposing him are internal, not factual. If the *Bildungsroman* is indeed of a philosophical nature, it is to show that man's propensity for intellectual speculation is real, and beneficial. To reflect whilst one lives is to live better. But consciousness and being are two sides of the same coin, and, as discussed before, the *Bildungsheld* must not live segregated from the complications and challenges of life. The individual must come in contact with the world, but after the world is shaped and reshaped from within. Life and thought, thought and life: it is just a question of where the greater emphasis is placed (well aware that life makes thought possible in the first place). And of knowing which is of greater relevance to the *Bildungsroman* and to the narrative of initiation.

2.1. The new spirit of place of American fiction: distinctive features of the narrative of initiation

> Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.
>
> Ralph Waldo Emerson

Lawrence's quotation at the head of the previous section implies that American literature had developed its own traditions. None the less, and as previously mentioned, the term *Bildungsroman* has been used widely to cover a variety of texts: Malcolm Bradbury calls Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) a *Bildungsroman* in which no one gets educated; Vanderwerken applies the same label to Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895); and Isaac Sequeira considers not only *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* but also Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) — which is not a novel but a short-story sequence — to be *Bildungsromane*.[54]

I chose to concentrate on these three examples as typical of the fundamental differences between the American narrative of initiation and the *Bildungsroman* as genres, but not only for this reason. They are also of interest because they are central to the establishment of traditions shared by many American narratives of initiation, which in turn explains their influence upon and connections with Hemingway's *The Nick Adams Stories*. Given that so many texts, including these three, have been treated as *Bildungsromane*, one can

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[54] See Malcolm Bradbury: 'The Expatriate Tradition in American Literature', *BAAS Pamphlets in American Studies* (1982); Vanderwerken (1997); and Isaac Sequeira's own *The Theme of Initiation in Modern American Fiction* (Mysore: Geetha, 1975).

perhaps be tempted to agree with Scott Donaldson and Ann Massa when they say that the *Bildungsroman* 'constitutes a sub-genre in all literatures', instead of clinging to what appear to be mere questions of terminology.[55] Yet I believe that doing so would only diminish the accomplishments of the idiosyncratic American narrative of initiation.

When enumerating typical American traits, Byron E. Shafer notes that a strong sense of individualism is the backbone of American culture and society.[56] And as a result, this sense of individualism also became a major concern of American fiction. In most novels of youth development, this individualism leads to distrust and rejection of organised society, as Leslie A. Fiedler notes: 'The typical male protagonist of our fiction has been a man on the run, harried into the forest and out to sea, down the river or into combat—anywhere to avoid "civilization".'[57]

Now if one bears in mind, for example, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, as well as the legacy of the *Aufklärung*, it is possible to see that the individual progression of the *Bildungsroman*'s protagonist is directed — ideally, at least — towards finding a role in society for the protagonist. In American fiction, however, and generally speaking, accommodation into society entails giving up

[55] Scott Donaldson and Ann Massa, *American Literature: Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Newton Abbot, London and Vancouver: David & Charles, 1978), p. 138
[56] See 'What is the American Way? Four Themes in Search of their Next Incarnation', in *Is America Different? A New Look at American Exceptionalism*, ed. Byron E. Shafer (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).
[57] Leslie A. Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Criterion, 1960), p. xx

individuality and hope, because society is seen as repressive, its cruelty and violence likely to crush the individual. In American fiction, when it comes to the relation between the individual and society, a sense of closure is not frequent, because individualism is often seen as a condition that cannot be surrendered, and the struggle to preserve it could hardly be more different from the *Aufklärung*'s all-embracing civilising enterprise.

The protagonist of American fiction is, of course, very unlike his 'European father': he is an individual born out of no social tradition, with an aspiration to be different, leaving behind all superfluity and tradition, and falling back on the nature of things.[58] The prototypical protagonist of American fiction, then, is an emancipated individual — especially from his European ancestry —, an individual standing alone in new surroundings, in the middle of untouched nature. It is only normal that this new, pure and crude man finds many times the remedy for the evils of society in nature, in a tradition that goes back to Emerson or Thoreau. Thoreau even thought that nature was strangled by the conventions of America that had come from Europe, as R. W. B. Lewis notes: 'They had been superimposed upon nature. They had to be washed away, like sin.'[59]

The nature years of much American fiction are of particular importance in the development of a young man. They mean that the youth is still not a part of

[58] R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 23
[59] Ibid., p. 23

the male world of adult responsibilities, but also that he is no longer part of the world of family and home: immersed in the green heart of nature, in a forest, near a lake, the protagonist exists in a limbo of better potentialities, away from the limitations of different traditions.

The theme of nature is present throughout the American narrative of initiation, from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to *The Nick Adams Stories*: 'The Good Bad Boy is, of course, America's vision of itself, crude and unruly in his beginnings, but endowed by his creator with an instinctive sense of what is right.'[60] Nature is related to instinct, instinct is related to innocent goodness. The exclusive emphasis on the instinctive, none the less, is one more aspect of the American "departure" from the *Bildungsroman* tradition rooted, to a considerable extent, in the rational practice of the *Aufklärung*. One should also avoid the fallacy of confusing the *Bildungsroman*'s debt to the intuititive side of Pietism with the narrative of initiation's reliance on the instinctive: this instinct is visceral, physical, even savage, and is far removed from Pietism's intuitive spirituality.

It is for all these reasons that, when it comes to American narratives of development of a young protagonist, I prefer to follow the position of Ian Ousby, for example, who says that in American fiction there is a tendency to avoid 'the full-scale *Bildungsroman* to concentrate instead on a particular rite of passage or

[60] Fiedler (1960), p. 268

initiation in the hero's youth'.[61] Hence the designation that I have been adopting: narrative of initiation, which is much more valid and apt to describe the development of a young protagonist in American fiction as a whole.[62]

Briefly forgetting that what is being dealt with is a German word, formed out of a German concept, one has to admit that genres such as the *Bildungsroman* do evolve, and do so according to the sensibility of writers. But culture is the great writer of novels, and culture is, after all, part of the body, not of garments: there are cultural traits from which national literary creation takes a very long time to free itself, if it manages to do so at all. Not all American narratives of initiation are the same, of course, any more than *Bildungsromane*, yet both should be regarded as types of the novel which are *intrinsically* different. To use the definition narrative of initiation is a good starting point to measure their differences and similarities, and their particular idiosyncrasies.

The *Bildungsroman*, as seen above, resents a gradual, organic *Werdegang*, whereas the rite of passage in the American novel is often sudden and brutal, as Arno Heller points out:

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[61] Ian Ousby, '*Bildungsroman*', in *The Cambridge Guide to Fiction in English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 50. Still, Ousby does in fact acknowledge the term *Bildungsroman*, as does Gerhart Meyer, who none the less notes: 'Die Thematik der Identitätssuche eines jungen Protagonisten [ist dem amerikanischen Roman] bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts fremd geblieben'. In fact, he puts just two novels in that category: Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) and Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), which fall outside the chronological scope of this thesis. Both authors had, furthermore, first-hand knowledge of German literature. See Mayer (1992), p. 399.

[62] Angela Schmidt also thinks this term is appropriate, as it is a product of literary criticism linked to questions that deal with the United States' very identity. Much as with the *Bildungsroman* and Germany, the question here is one of "Americanness": the hero's search for identity mirrors that of the country. See

> Unlike the European novels of growth, in which the young protagonists go through long processes of socialization with all their complex social and psychological implications, the coming of age of the American fictional hero is in most cases condensed into a short and shattering 'initiation', i.e. a sudden confrontation with experience depriving him of his former 'innocence'.[63]

The concept of initiation was first used in connection with American literature by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, and it described an event by means of which the protagonist of a narrative 'discovers something about the nature of evil, and he tries to find some way of coming to terms with his discovery'.[64] With time, the concept expanded to include other characteristics, but always within this frame.

When speaking of initiation, however, one must proceed with caution, as the notion is borrowed from anthropology and ethnology, and has to do with the passage of a youth into manhood in a certain society. This means that this passage represents an acceptance of the values of that given society, which are perpetuated by being thus passed from one generation to another. However, as is the case with American fiction, what happens most frequently is that the young protagonist is at odds with society: instead of being led into society, then, the fictional initiate becomes an outsider (the journey motif is frequent), thus being

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Angela Schmidt, *The Invention of Initiation: Ein amerikanisches Genre unter dem Aspekt der Geschlechterdifferenz* (Munich: Akademischer Verlag, 1996).

[63] Arno Heller, *Experiments with the Novel of Maturation: Henry James and Stephen Crane* (Innsbruck: AMOE, 1976), p. 5

[64] See Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Fiction* (New York: Crofts, 1943), p. 344.

in a privileged position to act, or be seen, as a critic of that same society. Going back to it can only happen, if it ever does, in an ultimate stage of the narrative.[65]

Apart from social scientific considerations, initiation in American fiction has other meanings when compared, for example, with the *Bildungsroman*:

> Unlike their counterparts in [...] European tradition, American writers often exhibit such interest as they have in human nature, not by inferring from the settled manners and morals of their characters the enduring qualities of their souls, but rather by submitting their characters to sudden, often violent, confrontations with 'otherness' to see whether, and, if so, to what degree and with what effect, they can change.[66]

This moment of crisis marks the painful transition to manhood. As society is overwhelmingly seen as negative and the world pregnant with evil, the gaining of this negative experience on part of the protagonist implies many a time 'that the valid rite of initiation for the individual [...] is not an initiation *into* society, but, given the character of society, an initiation *away from it*'.[67] The personal longings of the protagonist are very frequently set against the impersonal forces of society, and the individual reacts accordingly to the forces of authority acting

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[65] For the various meanings and applications of the term 'initiation', see Peter Freese, *'Die Initiationsreise: Studien zum jugendlichen Helden im modernen amerikanischen Roman mit einer exemplarischen Analyse von J. D. Salingers The Catcher in the Rye* (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1971). For examples of female initiation, see Schmidt (1996), as Freese deals primarily with novels of male initiation, which, as he (rightly) points out, amount to ninety per cent of the total of the "canon".

[66] Giles Gunn, *The Interpretation of Otherness: Literature, Religion, and the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 195. The notion of 'otherness' is much dealt with in the United States, as it derives to some extent from the original experience of colonisation and from the problem of how to cope with different modes of existence. In general, to refer to someone as 'other' is to put her or him outside the category of what is considered normality. In literature, too, the perception of 'otherness' is often related to characters which appear as different from what is perceived as normal in the general social and cultural framework constructed by the novel.

[67] Lewis (1955), p. 115

upon him. And, as Ihab Hassan rightly notes, the encounter between individual and world might assume one of two forms, which he calls 'initiation' or 'victimisation': 'Now initiation may be understood as a process leading through right action and consecrated knowledge to a *viable* mode of life *in the world*. Its end is *confirmation*. The result of victimization, however, is *renunciation*. Its characteristic mode is *estrangement* from the world.'[68]

The initiate is extremely raw and naïve about the ways of the world, and this innocence has always been a central concept in American fiction: 'The key term in the moral vocabulary of Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, and their followers and imitators consequently was "innocence".'[69] The shattering of this innocence is one important moment in the narrative of initiation. How the protagonist reacts to it is at the centre of the narrative. And it must be added that the protagonist's ultimate reaction, his ultimate choice, will be intimately related to notions of courage, or, rather, to the notion of courage valued by the narrator. The idea of courage, however defined, is generally very important for the American narrative of initiation.

The young protagonists, and as in the *Bildungsroman*, are most vulnerable to change, because, courageous or less so, they are alert and eager, they want to see and know the world. They exist at the crossroads of social and personal self-

[68] Ihab Hassan, *Radical Innocence: Studies in the Contemporary American Novel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 35
[69] Lewis (1955), p. 7

definition. In the United States, a relatively young country, the sheer number of narratives of initiation exemplifies this and may also have a deeper cultural meaning: 'The theme [of initiation], however, is of particular importance in American literature. As a young nation that went through the pangs of maturation, of a *rite de passage* from innocence to knowledge, the United States of America embodies the theme in its very history.'[70] Just as the *Bildungsroman* cannot be divorced from German culture, the narrative of initiation is also inseparable from notions of the American way.

Three important narratives in this American fictional tradition will be analysed. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Red Badge of Courage* and *Winesburg, Ohio* all deal with different aspects of initiation, and, as mentioned above, they can certainly be seen as three significant milestones along the path of American fiction that leads to *The Nick Adams Stories*. There is no denying the eclectic influence that all of them had on the shaping of Hemingway's prose, not only because of their style, but also because of their characteristic American traits. When establishing the genealogy of American fiction, the critic William Van O'Connor makes mention of all these texts: he goes from Twain's book — *fons et origo*, it seems — up to modern American fiction and Hemingway, and passing by Gertrude Stein, Crane and Anderson.[71]

[70] Sequeira (1975), p. 10
[71] See William Van O'Connor, 'Why Huckleberry Finn is not the Great American Novel', *in Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn*, ed. Barry A. Marks (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1959), p. 105.

Huckleberry Finn is often compared to a young Nick Adams, and the theme of nature permeates the two narratives of initiation of these vernacular protagonists. The non-heroic treatment of war is as much a feature in the depiction of the baptism of fire of Private Henry Fleming as it is for the soldier Nick Adams. And the fragmentary nature of Anderson's short-story sequence lays the foundations for fictional constructs such as *The Nick Adams Stories*. Relations of interdependence and intertextuality more than suggest themselves.

All of these narratives have their own peculiar characteristics, as well as others that they share with the tradition of American fiction as a whole, as much as the *Bildungsroman* came to be identified with German culture. Seen as a whole, the tradition extending from Twain to Crane to Anderson helps to understand American fiction of the early twentieth century. In Hemingway's case, at least, that tradition seems clear enough.

II

Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre and two of its descendants

1. The *Bildung* of a beautiful soul: the influence of subjectivity and the question of *Selbstbildung*

Durch alle Wesen reicht der eine Raum:
Weltinnenraum.
Rainer Maria Rilke

It is almost a matter of some irritation that the controversy surrounding the existence of the *Bildungsroman* genre goes on even when the discussion is centred on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*.[1] This could be seen as normal, as critics often disagree when defining the typology of a given literary work. The problem here lies in the fact that Goethe's novel is widely thought to be the very model of the *Bildungsroman* genre. If the combination of its peculiar characteristics does not make a *Bildungsroman*, then it might be possible to say that the genre itself does not really exist at all. Genre definition, as was said above, is one of the most complex fields of literary studies, and a careful approach must be taken. As I am inclined to accept the existence of the *Bildungsroman* as a literary genre, it must be made clear that the critical debate again centres on the question of *Bildung*: what it is, if it is reached, to what extent it has to be reached.

[1] This novel derived from an earlier and unfinished Goethe manuscript called *Wilhelm Meisters Theatralische Sendung*. The similarities and differences between the two are not, however, of major relevance to this section of the thesis.

Some contemporary critics have attempted to dislodge *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* from the (seemingly unchallenged) position it has enjoyed since the nineteenth-century definitions of Morgenstern and Dilthey. But questions about the nature of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* had surfaced even when it first appeared, the controversy raging from early on: in Schiller's view Wilhelm achieves his goals of *Bildung*; Wilhelm von Humboldt sincerely doubted this.[2] More recently, critics such as Karl Schlechta, Thomas P. Saine or John Blair, to mention only a few, have disputed whether the *Bildungsideal* is attained or not by Wilhelm by the time the novel ends, when he marries Natalie.[3] The main point of dissent is whether something changes in Wilhelm's outlook on life in a way that agrees with the concept of *Bildung*; if he has indeed become a *Meister* or if his attitude towards life remains essentially unchanged.[4]

The open-endedness of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* — the fact that the protagonist is not shown putting the *Bildungsideal* fully to "use" (i.e. he has not reached it) and that his venture into society is cut short by the end of the novel (i.e. there is no chance to see it) — is what has led many critics to question the status of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as a *Bildungsroman*. None the less, it must

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[2] See, for example, Jacobs (1972), p. 81f. Most studies about Goethe's novel, it must be said, focus on controversies such as these.

[3] See, for instance, John Blair, *Tracing Subversive Currents in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (Columbia: Camden House, 1997).

[4] In a letter Goethe wrote to Schiller on the 6th of December 1794 he remarked that it would have been much more apt to call the protagonist of his work 'Wilhelm Schüler' (student) instead of 'Wilhelm Meister' (master). See *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe in den Jahren 1794 bis 1805,* in *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens*, ed. Manfred Beetz (Munich: Hanser, 1990), 8.1, 45.

be kept in mind that *Bildung* is not exclusively related to external factors, it has first of all to do with the individual's most fundamental and innermost nature.

The controversy is understandable, to some extent, because *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*'s lack of definition has always been seen as one of its greatest attractions: 'The fascination of "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre" lies in the fact that it is constantly eluding one's grasp.'[5] None the less, there are still viewpoints that accept a more traditional reading, in the sense that critics accept the novel's status as a *Bildungsroman*: Ivar Sagmo and Per Øhrgaard, for example, think that *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* novel does display a psychological process of emancipation of the protagonist, as well as his acceptance of responsibility to others.[6]

The debate is not always peaceful, of course, and Jacobs, who has produced an extensive study that aims at listing all *Bildungsromane*, has been vehemently attacked by Blair as someone who has the pretension of having 'objective knowledge of the author's intention' when he says that critics who deny *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*'s status as a *Bildungsroman* have misunderstood the whole point of the novel. Blair says that all those critics are doing is defending the individual's right to realise his personal aspirations by

[5] Eric A. Blackall, 'Sense and Nonsense in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*', in *Deutsche Beiträge zur geistigen Überlieferung*, 5 (1965), 49

[6] Ivar Sagmo, *Bildungsroman und Geschichtsphilosophie: eine Studie zu Goethes Roman "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre"* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1982), p. 45

himself, saying in fact that those same aspirations should not depend on the protagonist's assimilation into society.[7]

One of the peculiarities of the pre-twentieth century *Bildungsroman* is that it is an optimistic literary form which allows the reconciliation of the protagonist with society without any life-denying sacrifice on his part, and here the *Bildungsroman* differs from the twentieth-century novel in general. In the latter, social accommodation is frequently seen as self-renunciation, which explains the problematic figures of much of the literature of the past century. The *Bildungsroman*, being a genre concerned with ethical behaviour, rather allows the protagonist to go into society with a renewed ethical insight into the world of events. In this sense, I agree with Jacobs and his vision of Wilhelm's discovery of an ethics based on duty, as will be shown throughout this chapter.

When looking at *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, one must bear in mind that it is essentially a novel that stems from the context of the *Aufklärung*. In this sense, it is a *Zeitroman*, and it was widely believed at the time that social and personal problems could be solved in a more enlightened society by more enlightened individuals, which is quite different from the general disenchantment of twentieth-century novels when it comes to the relation between the individual and society at large. This synchronic perspective is an important factor to keep in mind when analysing the novel.

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[7] Blair (1997), p. 7. Also see Jacobs (1972).

The conflicting views of critics mostly arise from *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*'s ambiguous ending, since it is not entirely clear whether Wilhelm achieves the goal of his *Bildungsprozeß* or not. As a rule, critics do not dispute the existence of *Bildungsideal(e)* or the changes in Wilhelm; they just cannot agree when it comes to the effective attainment of any ideal. So, if nothing else, *Bildung* can at the very least be seen as a guiding light on Wilhelm's journey throughout the novel.

Sagmo determines that there are two possible readings in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*: one he calls the ideal reading, which agrees with Wilhelm's emancipation — 'der ideelle Gehalt der "Lehrjahre"' —, and the other the real *Gehalt*, the real content, in which the protagonist achieves very little.[8] The real reading is based on the (true) view that the novel ends when Wilhelm has not yet returned to society, thus making it impossible to verify if he goes back *gebildet*, if he has achieved the goal of *Bildung*.

Bildung had always been of concern to Wilhelm since early on in his life, as he explains in a letter to Werner: 'Daß ich dir's mit *einem* Worte sage: mich selbst, ganz wie ich bin, auszubilden, das war dunkel von Jugend auf mein Wunsch und meine Absicht.' (WML, 290) Yet critics who sympathise with the real reading think that it is naïve to give much credit to this particular statement

[8] Sagmo (1982), p. 46

of intentions by Wilhelm. They rather say that, despite his endeavour, Wilhelm persists in repeating the same mistakes until the end of the novel, thus undergoing no process of self-awareness (and "self-maturity", almost) at all, something which casts doubt upon his very own words.

What should not be overlooked, though, is that *Bildung* always begins with an *innerer Ruf*, that inner calling that has all to do with the subjectivity of the protagonist of the *Bildungsroman*, as Jacobs notes: '[Der] in ihm angelegte Bildungstrieb, der entelechische Kern seines Wesens.'[9] The errors of a young Wilhelm do not obliterate that calling. Wilhelm's mistakes are more a consequence of an incorrect appreciation of his own potential, and he becomes aware of the fact that he should not try and go beyond his talents: 'Wilhelm learns to recognize that we are able to do only what we are capable of doing, that we can be effective only with those talents which we possess.'[10] So if the *Aufklärung*'s motto 'sapere aude!' is valid, so is, to some extent, another one from another time: 'know thyself'.

This is another important aspect of *Bildung* that derives from the *Aufklärung*, as Wilhelm learns to look inside his own self in a judicious way; the *Bildungsprozeß* has to do with self-awareness, as he knows: 'Glücklich, wer den Fehlschluß von seinen Wünschen auf seine Kräfte bald gewahr wird.' (WML,

[9] Jacobs (1972), p. 79
[10] Hans Reiss, *Goethe's Novels* (New York: St. Martin's, 1969), p. 123

(WML, 82) But this does not mean that *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* is a conformist novel, even if it can be described as being somewhat pragmatic.

Wilhelm's statement in the letter to Werner has been one of the main points of controversy in the interpretation of the novel as a whole, and that is not surprising, as this controversy deals with the question of *Bildung* itself. Wilhelm's quest for self-cultivation is clearly shown in the letter, and for the first time in the novel. For many years, and because of the distinct nature of Wilhelm's statement, related to a *Bildungsideal* of humanist tendency, the letter was seen as the crux of the entire novel, but that has not been the case with more recent studies, which consider both that the *Bildung* of personality is just a phase in Wilhelm's endeavour, later to be complemented by social integration; and that the intention Wilhelm expresses in the letter is not faithful to the course of events.

The *Bildungsprozeß* starts from within; it is related to the "inner gold", the noumenon, of the protagonist. As Jarno, one of the members of the *Turmgesellschaft* — the secret society of the tower that follows Wilhelm's path and whose members he meets under various guises throughout the novel —, says to Wilhelm, only a few have the ability to act in agreement with this inner law: '"Derjenige, an dem viel zu entwickeln ist, wird später über sich und die Welt

aufgeklärt. Es sind nur wenige, die den Sinn haben und zugleich zur Tat fähig sind.'" (WML, 550)[11]

There is a tradition of inwardness in the German novel, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Self-awareness is vital to any *Bildungsprozeß*, and it is conceivable that it is that same awareness which is behind Wilhelm's attempts at seeing his endeavours through: '*Meister* also suggests that we will find the key to modern personality, and to its sphere of everyday operation, not so much in specific "activities" but in a peculiar *disposition of the soul.*'[12] This must be considered if one takes Wilhelm's statement to be sincere. This inner disposition, the inner capacity of the protagonist, marks the beginning of all *Bildung* endeavours, and it is what will allow him to later act upon the world. Still, the fact that the world begins as subsidiary in the shaping of the protagonist does not negate the fact that the *Bildungsprozeß*'s ultimate goal is reconciliation with society.

In a first phase, because he disagrees with the ways of the world he knows, Wilhelm feels the need to reflect upon his life by breaking with his familiar surroundings: this kind of freedom is seen as necessary for self-cultivation. Internal factors lie at the heart of this longing for freedom, as the

[11] Jarno's next sentence in this exchange is: 'Der Sinn erweitert, aber lähmt; die Tat belebt, aber beschränkt'; the balance between the two, then, is very important for *Bildung*, as will be shown in the remainder of this chapter.
[12] Franco Moretti, 'The Comfort of Civilization', in *Representations*, 0 (1985), 126

protagonist's self is somewhat stifled by the familiar.[13] Yet, ultimately, action in the world is necessary to give validity — the stamp of reality — to the protagonist's inner operations. There must be tension between reflection and action, and a balance must be achieved.

There are two sides to *Bildung*, then. One of them is the social-historical side, as it were, and it is concerned with acting on the world's stage. This is the side of *Bildung* that Liisa Saariluoma aptly calls 'Repräsentationsfähigkeit'. She mentions it in relation to Wilhelm's letter, but adds:

> Es darf aber nicht übersehen werden, dass in Wilhelms Brief auch Stellen vorkommen, in denen von der Bildung im persönlichen Sinne, als Ausbildung der Anlagen, gesprochen wird. [...] Wilhelm redet, anders gesagt, von der persönlichen Bildung und von weltmännischer Bildung, ohne sie voneinander zu unterscheiden.[14]

So the two sides of *Bildung* must ultimately coexist, therein lies the tension between them, the tension that causes forward movement, and this is something that lies at the heart of Wilhelm's efforts. The *Bildungsprozeß* must have as its ultimate goal practical activity, after being at first the formation of personality in a humanist-philosophical sense. Yet the formation of *Persönlichkeit* originates everything, and Wilhelm chooses it at first instead of the perhaps rewarding but

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[13] Moretti considers that the *Bildungsroman* genre deals with youth because youth is a time of 'complete liberty', thus potentially becoming the most significant stage in the shaping of the protagonist's *Weltanschauung*. He also considers this focus on youth to be a general concern of modern fiction. Ibid., 138.

[14] Liisa Saariluoma, *Die Erzählstruktur des frühen deutschen Bildungsromans: Wielands "Geschichte des Agathon" und Goethes "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre"* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1985), p. 289

narrow world of trade that was to be his lot in the world, if he had heeded the wishes of both his father and his friend Werner.

This very German question of inwardness lies at the heart of the *Bildungsroman*, and the protagonist's inner nature does play a great role in his formation: in Wilhelm's case it all begins, indeed, with *nature* rather than with *nurture*. The question of the protagonist's subjectivity is related to the *Aufklärung*'s influence, in the sense that there must be a maturing of rational qualities; but, due to the influence of Pietism, the inner self should also encompass emotion and love to complement pure reason. This happens because all these factors are part of man's innermost nature, and nature — both individual and of the world at large — is extremely important for the unfolding of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*.

The *Bildungsroman* is seen as a novel focused almost exclusively on the inner experiences of the protagonist, and this happens too with Goethe's novel, as most characters 'are delineated only in so far as their psychological experiences are of relevance to Wilhelm's development. We are given a little background knowledge, but the door to their inner life is never opened wide'.[15] As was mentioned in the previous chapter, events and persons only seem to be meaningful if they are able to strike a chord within the protagonist. In a way,

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[15] Reiss (1969), p. 106

then, the *Bildungsroman* is a very egotistical kind of novel, since its chief character is self-seeking to the point of leaving room for little else: the other characters of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* are frequently seen as nothing but 'ciphers for potentialities within him [Wilhelm]'.[16]

The preponderance of *Innerlichkeit*, the rendering inwards which Mann spoke of, is decidedly a feature of Goethe's novel. The subjectivity of the protagonist infuses the entire novel. Yet, in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, there is access to the inner nature of somebody else (even if it is a character who is not actively involved in the narrative action). This happens in the sixth book, aptly called 'Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele' — 'Confessions of a beautiful soul'. Here the reader gains access to a woman's psychobiography, so to speak, and one with strong Pietist overtones.

It is a meaningful part of the novel as a whole because what is narrated has that decisive ability to strike a chord within Wilhelm, as he considers this woman's — the *Stiftsdame*'s — life to be most admirable, and recognises some of the traits of her spiritual quest in him. She shows him 'how one human being finds fulfilment by withdrawal from the world, by a life of concentrated inwardness'.[17] These confessions of the beautiful soul introduce the topic of

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[16] Swales (1978), p. 73
[17] Ibid., p. 58

looking at the world with reference to the inner life, as spiritual development was what mattered most for the Pietist, and here lie the similarities with Wilhelm:

> Als er [Wilhelm] wirklich anfing, an seine Komposition zu gehen, ward er leider gewahr, daß er von Empfindungen und Gedanken, von manchen Erfahrungen des Herzens und Geistes sprechen und erzählen konnte, nur nicht von äußern Gegenstände, denen er, wie er nun merkte, nicht die mindeste Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt hatte. (WML, 266)

The story of the *schöne Seele* is a story about a search for harmony, a harmony which the *Stiftsdame* cannot find in the world, and the result is an attempt at fulfilling that aspiration in the richness of her inner life (in her case, she understands that a relationship with God is more likely to meet the complexity of her soul than any secular activity, and she thus distances herself from everyday life).

Ferdinand Gustav Kühne makes mention of the *Bildungsheld*'s own turning towards the individual sphere, and considers that this occurs with a conscious neglect of his relationship to public life.[18] This is also the case with Wilhelm: 'So groß war seine Leidenschaft, so rein seine Überzeugung, er handle vollkommen recht, sich dem Drucke seines bisherigen Lebens zu entziehen.' (WML, 42) The withdrawal from the world of practical activity is a necessity for Wilhelm: the tradition of the *Bildungsroman* is fertile in periods in which the protagonists take leave, as it were, of the world, almost as if there is a must for *Bildungshelden* to be able to gather themselves away from the humdrum of life.

[18] See Steinecke, in Hardin (1991), p. 83.

This is what seems to allow them to discover their true selves, as Wilhelm too sees: 'Du fühlst nicht, daß in den Menschen ein besserer Funke lebt, der, wenn er keine Nahrung erhält, wenn er nicht geregt wird, von der Asche täglicher Bedürfnisse und Gleichgültigkeit tiefer bedeckt und doch so spät und fast nie erstickt wird.' (WML, 55)[19]

The stultifying world of Wilhelm's family tradition, the world of trade — which he calls Sibyl, the personification of trade, as opposed to the Muse of poetry —, seems insufferable to him. But this fear of specialisation, of compromise, in the world, the same fear that causes the *Bildungsheld* to seek refuge from it and retreat to his inwardness, must not, none the less, lead to any extremes. It should not be so excessive as to render impossible a future reconciliation, on the protagonist's terms, with the world. *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, after all, is not a radical novel of this kind. The social world must rather be seen 'as a world of convention, which is partially open to penetration by living meaning'.[20] This reconciliation would be impossible were the *Bildungsheld* to sink too deep into his own subjectivity, as *Bildung* must achieve a golden mean between inwardness and activity. An exaggerated tendency towards any one of these spheres would hamper the *Bildungsprozeß*, being what

[19] This can happen with the introduction of a journey in the narrative, as, in many *Bildungsromane*, the protagonist must leave his familiar surroundings to have different experiences directed at self-cultivation. Wilhelm's movement to different locations throughout the novel reveals his dissatisfaction with immediate reality.

[20] Georg Lukács, quoted in Moretti (1985), 137.

Sagmo calls the extremes of 'image without substance' and 'inwardness without actuality'.[21]

In *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, it is made clear what happens to characters who have exaggerated tendencies towards either one of these directions. Mignon and the Harper, for example, die as the result of obscure diseases, both created by excessive Romanticism (Werner, of course, is the opposite extreme). So Wilhelm must learn to look at reality in a more objective way and less from the perspective of emotion, as he had early on.[22]

Sagmo quite usefully refers to Goethe's own general theories about the transformation of living things, which says that these have, first of all, an inner nature, in other words, what *constitutes* them. Goethe called this nature the 'Urbild'. Bearing this in mind, Sagmo considers that behind the simply metaphorical consideration of the notion of metamorphosis lies the assumption that the individual must first look to his own primordial image and then strive to make this image visible according to his own given individual conditions.[23] This kind of "inner inspection" allows Wilhelm to realise his own potential (and also his own limitations). If exterior circumstances had too much weight on this process, that could be damaging and impair Wilhelm's *Bildung* as a whole: 'Ist

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[21] See Sagmo (1982), p. 235.
[22] As Goethe said to Eckermann: 'Das Romantische [nenne ich] das Kranke.' See Goethe, *Eckermanns Gespräche mit Goethe*, in *Sämtliche Werke nach Epoche seines Schaffens* (Munich: Hanser, 1989), 19, 300.
[23] See Sagmo (1982), p. 87.

die Fremdbestimmung stärker als die Selbstbestimmung, [dann wird] die Metamorphose [...] gestört oder gehemmt.'[24] Yet neglect of the world can also be a potential danger to the *Bildungsprozeß*.

The fact that the *Bildungsprozeß* starts within, so to speak, does not mean that self-cultivation is an autonomous condition. If there are two phases that can be seen as successive, they should also be seen as interacting, always bearing in mind that the self cannot be fully reconciled with the world if it is not clarified and developed: 'Ihre [Bildungs] Grundlage ist die Forderung, daß der Einzelne aus sich heraustritt und sich objektiviert.'[25]

1.1. '*Wer sich der Einsamkeit ergibt*': activity in the world and the search for the golden mean

> The theme of becoming and *Bildung* and the theme of testing are by no means mutually exclusive within the confines of the modern novel: on the contrary, they may enter into a profound and organic union.
> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Discourse in the Novel*

Wilhelm's relationship to the world is not exclusively antagonistic. He has glimpses of the bright side of practical activity throughout the novel, but does not seem to pay much attention to them at the beginning, or rather, he acknowledges the positive aspects of practical activity but seems to forget them soon afterwards. Much, as will be seen later, as the protagonist of *Der Zauberberg*,

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[24] Loc. cit.
[25] Jacobs (1972), p. 275. Jacobs also notes that there are similarities between the ideal of *Bildung* and Hegel's philosophical system, one in which antitheses like reason and reality, freedom and commitment, the particular and the general, progress towards a synthesis.

who frequently forgets the moments of insight into life that he has. One example of this occurs in one of his several journeys in the company of Laertes:

> Die lebhafte Handelsstadt, in der er sich befand, gab ihm bei der Unruhe des Laertes, der ihn überall mit herumschleppte, den anschaulichsten Begriff eines großen Mittelpunktes, woher alles ausfließt und wohin alles zurückkehrt, und es war das erste Mal, daß sein Geist im Anschauen dieser Art von Tätigkeit sich wirklich ergötzte. (WML, 276)

Yet despite this increased awareness, Wilhelm none the less goes back to the somewhat reclusive, escapist world of the theatre.

It is none the less the reading of Shakespeare's plays that triggers this increased awareness on Wilhelm's part, as he starts to become animated (albeit in his own peculiar way) by ideas of fervent activity: 'Diese wenigen Blicke, die ich in Shakespeare's Welt getan, reizen mich mehr als irgend etwas andres, in der wirklichen Welt schnellere Fortschritte vorwärts zu tun, mich in die Flut der Schicksale zu mischen, die über sie verhängt sind.' (WML, 192) It is Jarno who lends Wilhelm the plays of Shakespeare, with the hope of releasing him from a kind of life almost exclusively concerned with himself, which in turn causes the neglect of the outside world. Shakespeare's plays do have an influence on Wilhelm, but, he is rather more interested, at this stage, in experiencing life through his dramatic roles.[26] Yet he will discover that the theatre is not a suitable vehicle for *Bildung*: 'The theater has offered [Wilhelm] an adventurous, nomadic

[26] Blair says that Wilhelm's character is representative of his time, 'as defections among middle-class youth in the eighteenth century were commonplace. Many fled their families and ran to the theater.' See Blair (1997), p. 38.

existence, the chance to extend the self through the adoption of various roles, but it is an existence without cohesion and focus.'[27]

Wilhelm thought that it was possible to become *gebildet* by means of dramatic intensity, but the people of the theatre in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* are often not portrayed in a very sympathetic light, including the troupe Wilhelm joins.[28] The positive side of the theatre arises from the fact that Wilhelm plays different roles on stage, something which gives him a particular outlook into some aspects of existence and allows him to experiment with different points of view, confronting him, especially when he plays the role of Hamlet, with profound and complex situations. Wilhelm's adoption of this role seems to be of no little consequence: some members of the society of the tower, who are mostly opposed to Wilhelm's acting endeavours (mainly because he is often involved in plays of dubious aesthetic value, whereas they believe, in conformity with the tenets of the *Aufklärung*, that only "good" art befits one's formation), even help him to set up the play. They do this, incidentally, because they believe that mistakes by the individual can be important for a successful *Bildungsprozeß*.

Minden considers Wilhelm's experience of playing Hamlet to be very important, not only for Wilhelm's personal development, but also for the whole fabric of the novel: 'Hamlet is the subjective projection of Wilhelm (he sees and

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[27] Swales (1978), p. 57f

[28] If in *Wilhelm Meisters Theatralische Sendung* the theatre was the focus of the narrative action, in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* it stands for error and misdirection.

plays himself in Shakespeare's character), but *Hamlet* is the objective image of Wilhelm's inner life, offered to us as readers.'[29] The character Hamlet, after all, is representative of a Wilhelm whose inner life is often in a state of disarray. This is the reason why Wilhelm — by all accounts a mediocre actor, despite his original (before he gets to know himself) delusions of grandeur as educator of nations — enjoys such success playing Hamlet. Like Hamlet, Wilhelm is in many ways a passive character, and this reveals itself as a sign of *Innerlichkeit.* As the members of the society of the tower know only too well, when he plays Hamlet, Wilhelm is only playing himself, and thus not acting at all.

Hamlet is important for another reason: Wilhelm says more than once that, due to their higher nature. only noblemen can aspire to a true *Bildung*, and that because of his bourgeois roots his quest for it will always be unsuccessful. This has been seen by some critics as once again proving Wilhelm's many deficiencies of character, yet this state of affairs is more broadly related to the relative powerlessness of the German middle class. Wilhelm's similarities with Hamlet end up invalidating this assumption. Wilhelm has that same rich, yet unsettled, inner life that Hamlet has, and Hamlet is the son of a king. Wilhelm's nature, therefore, has the inner gold that is, after all, not only the property of the aristocracy. Playing Hamlet is important, then, because it allows Wilhelm to overcome some notions about himself; in this case, the stage is good therapy.

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[29] Michael Minden, *The German Bildungsroman: Incest and Inheritance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 36

Wilhelm's experience in the count's castle, where he is faced with his host's indifference and pretensions, also helps to alter his earlier viewpoint. Wilhelm now realises very strongly that the nobility is often too concerned with but appearances and frivolities, i.e. *exterior* concerns that should have nothing to do with what Wilhelm had hitherto perceived as the "higher nature" of noblemen: 'Das Betragen der Vornehmen gegen Geringere und auch untereinander ist nach äußern Vorzügen abgemessen; sie erlauben jedem, seinen Titel, seinen Rang, seine Kleider und Equipage, nur nicht seine Verdienste geltend zu machen.' (WML, 212)[30] What Wilhelm learns to see is that what truly matters must always be part of one's inner nature, regardless of social status. His original assumption is finally laid to rest with the mixed bourgeois and aristocratic marriages at the end of the novel, including his own.

Wilhelm releases himself for once and for all from both his idealised view of nobility and from his own imagined bourgeois limitations. True nobility has nothing to do with class, it breaks class barriers, as in the case of the noble members of the society of the tower who know no social hierarchy; rather they permit social mobility, because true worth is seen as lying within. Wilhelm had always equated nobility with a concept of the soul, of the inner nature, thus making his early ambitions more human than social. He thought that noblemen,

[30] Furthermore, through the plays, which are often staged before aristocrats, Wilhelm has the opportunity of dwelling among the nobility, and he does so with conviction and confidence.

because of their situation in life, had more freedom to pursue higher goals, *erste Güter*, only to find out that it is secondary aspects that are of interest to them.

Wilhelm has always been *bildungsfähig*. When he learns the story of the *Stiftsdame*, for example, he does not see it as a religious tale, but rather as a tale of someone's *Bildung*.[31] He considers hers to be a true inward calling, a true longing — *Sehnsucht* — for *Bildung*, yet despite his enthusiasm, the life of the *schöne Seele* also represents a clear danger.

If the risk of outside circumstances hampering the emergence of the self of the *Bildungsheld* exists, the other extreme finds its expression in the experience of the beautiful soul. Even if Wilhelm does not see it at first, he is soon able to see it in the behaviour of the descendants of the *Stiftsdame*, the aunt of Natalie, Wilhelm's future wife, who are members of the society of the tower. Their demeanour could not be more different from the one-sidedness of their aunt's strictly personal, inner *Bildung* (which also represents the threat that Wilhelm's path might end up being exactly the same):

> Das Ideal der Turmgesellschaft ist es, dass der Mensch sich zu einer nützlichen Tätigkeit ausbildet — aber in einer Weise, die den persönlichen Anlagen des Menschen entspricht. Das Streben nach der allseitigen Bildung der individuellen Anlagen sei in einer Entwicklungsphase des

[31] As Saariluoma notes: 'Erst sie vertritt nach Goethes eigenen Worten wahres Christentum. Die "christliche Religion" wird hier völlig unreligiös verstanden: sie bedeutet nur das humane Wirken zum Besten der Menschen.' See Saariluoma (1985), p. 299. In other words, the *Bildungsroman*'s Pietist heritage is by no means exclusively religious, but also humanist.

> Menschen richtig, aber danach müsse er lernen, 'um anderen Willen zu leben'.[32]

And this idea of interaction with other people, the interdependence of all humankind, is exactly what Jarno points out to Wilhelm: "'Nur alle Menschen machen die Menschheit aus, nur alle Kräfte zusammengenommen die Welt.'" (WML, 552) This is what the society of the tower would like Wilhelm to aspire to.

Several of the members of the society of the tower have the ability to strike a chord within Wilhelm, and it is important to clarify the role of this society in the context of the novel. If its members are seen as the true teachers of Wilhelm and the society as an educational institution, then the novel as a whole slides dangerously into the field of the *Erziehungsroman*, in that there would be a definite number of lessons, brought forward by the society's pedagogical tendencies, which Wilhelm would have to learn.

It seems to me, however, that Wilhelm never loses the autonomy of self that is at the core of the *Bildungsroman* genre. The question of his *Bildung* — with him since the beginning — remains intact. The role of the society is closer to the role that the characters Settembrini and Naphta play in *Der Zauberberg*, or Risach in *Der Nachsommer*, as will be seen further on. That is to say, the society clarifies questions that already have an answer in Wilhelm's inner gold; those

[32] Ibid., p. 306

answers provided by their examples in life are only meaningful to Wilhelm because of his innate *bildendes Potential*, his own predisposition for *Bildung*. That is the one reason why he can extract something from the example of the society's members. In this sense, he is (will be) only their equal. The *Turmgesellschaft*, despite some of its more mystical rituals, stands for a true institution of the *Aufklärung*, in that it has a social programme based on the rational evaluation of reality. It is not a dictatorial enterprise, a 'boarding school', as Swales puts it, but rather 'a reference point for active lives'.[33]

Wilhelm is open to many experiences during the novel, and, to some extent, all of these experiences leave marks on him. Many critics have said that he is not coherent and changes too rapidly. If one considers coherence an absolute virtue, this might be true, but, in fact, it is analogous to what happens in *Der Zauberberg*, where the protagonist is encouraged to experiment with different ideas and points of view — *placet experiri* —, and, besides, the only experience in Wilhelm's life that aspires to permanence is precisely his drive for *Bildung*.

There is much for Wilhelm to observe in the demeanour of the members of the society, especially Natalie, the true *schöne Seele* — so called by Lothario in the closing stages of the novel —, the perfect balance of inner and outer qualities. In her peacefulness, Natalie is for Wilhelm what the other women in his

[33] Swales (1978), p. 66

life — the convoluted figures of Mariane and Philine, for example — never were and never could be. Frequently described in idealistic terms, Natalie is in fact an ideal, the ideal of *Bildung*: '[Natalie ist] die Überwindung der Dichotomie von Welt und Geist [und] ist im Sinne der ethisch fundierten Ästethik der deutschen Klassik das Schöne und Gute in einem und also die wahrhafte "schöne Seele".'[34] In symbolical terms, it is through her that Wilhelm reaches his *Bildung*, as he finally manages to unite with his ideal.

As Saariluoma notes: 'Die Turmgesellschaft interessierte sich für Wilhelm, weil sie in ihm einen Menschen fand, der bereit war, sich sehr und uneigennützig zu bemühen und auf vieles zu verzichten, um das zu erreichen, was er für wertvoll ansah.'[35] The connection between Wilhelm and the society can then be seen exclusively in their like-mindedness; according to T. J. Reed, Wilhelm's resolution in choosing his own path is exclusively his own, and 'of direct guidance [by the society of the tower] there is little or no sign'.[36] The society is another building block of Wilhelm's formation, that eclectic formation that attempts to understand his life as an integrated whole, and not an infallible authority that solves the question of Wilhelm's *Bildungsproblematik*. It is just one part of the solution, as it were, and not an all-powerful and life-controlling (and life-smothering) institution, just another guiding light illuminating Wilhelm's own individual path.

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[34] Sagmo (1982), p. 234
[35] Saariluoma (1985), p. 310
[36] T. J. Reed, *The Classical Centre: Goethe and Weimar 1775-1832* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), p. 116

He respects the members of the society a great deal, acknowledges their examples and admires their quiet behaviour. Observing that behaviour, he also learns to be more unassuming, as he sees that others have the same concerns in life as he does, and no more: 'Die Turmgesellschaft ist keine Autorität Wilhelm gegenüber, sondern vielmehr eine in der Richtung ihrer Bestrebungen ihm parallele Menschengruppe, die auf demselben Wege weiter gegangen ist als er.'[37] Only Wilhelm's nature can set him free, because there is no greater power, in the broader sense, than life itself, and whatever the society does or says is always restricted when compared to life as a whole, to nature. The *Turmgesellschaft*'s goals, then, which are the same as Wilhelm's, are not to be found outside his own inner nature. The society of the tower could never be an end in itself for Wilhelm. Echoing Kant, the suggestion is that only man can. That is why Wilhelm (presumably) does not stay with the tower, but goes into life as *gebildet* as he could possibly expect to be.

1.2. The ethical parallel between Wilhelm and the reader

> Handle nur nach derjenigen Maxime,
> durch die du zugleich wollen kannst,
> daß sie ein allgemeines Gesetz werde.
> Immanuel Kant, *Grundlegung der Metaphysik der Sitten*

There is no great critical debate when it comes to the question of Wilhelm's late development, in the sense that most critics consider that he has

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[37] Saariluoma (1985), p. 322

changed in some way. But while all of his life experiences can be seen as the cause of this change, *Bildung* goes deeper than mere change through experience; it is a teleological process which springs from the individual's inner self. Wilhelm is an indecisive protagonist, but his attempts at self-cultivation show that he has no concern in speaking his mind and trying to construct his own visions. Wilhelm comes indeed very close to Hans Castorp in *Der Zauberberg* — or rather the opposite, of course, as it is Hans's *placet experiri* that resembles the pattern of Wilhelm's own digressions.

Wilhelm's incoherence and liveliness in experimenting with different outlooks on things — which explains his passion for the theatre — have driven critics, like Saine and Blair, to claim that he is unteachable.[38] There is a certain amount of confusion in this assumption, because Wilhelm has no lessons to learn, as established before, at the very most, he has to educate himself and let examples in life educate him. The ultimate aim of the *Bildungsprozeß* is harmonisation with the world, human wholeness, as Wilhelm sees in the Hall of the Past.[39] When the novel ends, he is at last ready to be engaged in society, to his and its benefit.

Bildung should not be something fixed and immovable. Keeping in mind Goethe's quotation from the previous chapter (see chapter I, note 22), motion in

[38] See, for example, Thomas P. Saine's 'Was *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* really supposed to be a Bildungsroman?', in Hardin (1991).
[39] See WML, book VIII, ch. 5.

life never stops, and *Bildung* should be seen in the same way: a position that allows for a better interaction with life's complexities, though never losing the adaptability to move along *with* that same life. In the sense of adapting, *Bildung* is in itself incoherent, because it is always dynamic. This has its roots in Schiller's observations. In his correspondence with Goethe, Schiller commented on what he perceived as Wilhelm's 'openness to redefinition': 'Daß er [Wilhelm] nun, unter der Schönen und heitern Führung der Natur (durch Felix) von dem idealischen zu reellen, von einem vagen Streben zum Handeln und zur Erkenntnis des wirklichen übergeht, [...] daß er Bestimmtheit erlangt, ohne die schöne Bestimmbarkeit zu verlieren.' This state of definiteness does not mean that Wilhelm loses his autonomy and the will to pursue his personal goals in the society he now seeks out. No individual is ever totally free in society, as social integration always implies some sort of consent; as Schiller puts it: 'Daß er [Wilhelm] sich begrenzen lernt, aber in dieser Begrenzung selbst, durch die Form, wieder den Durchgang zum unendlichen findet u.s.f. dieses nenne ich [...] das Ende seiner Lehrjahre.'[40]

Wilhelm has at the very least a notion of how to conduct himself in practical life and which ethics should guide his action, but this knowledge is always dynamic, there is no sense of possession for a concept of *Humanität* of this kind, as Hermann August Korff notes:

[40] Schiller to Goethe (8th of July 1796), in Goethe (1990), 8.1, 206.

> Seine [Wilhelms] Lehrjahre zeigen sich keineswegs dadurch beendet, daß wir den ursprünglich rein subjektivistisch eingestellten Menschen plötzlich in einen wahren Gemeinschaftsmenschen wirklich verwandelt sehen, sondern lediglich dadurch, daß er begreift, wo er das wahre Leben zu suchen habe.[41]

Wilhelm cannot be defined in strict terms, because *Bildung*, again, works for him as a guiding light.

The novel ends without a factual description of Wilhelm acting in full accordance with the *Bildungsideal*, but it is possible to infer from his path that he will apply in his life what he now comprehends, in the way Schiller suggests. Many a critic, like Emil Staiger and Swales, has said that the novel's ending is just evidence of Goethe's will simply to get *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* done with.[42] More than one critic has considered this argument, which is worth noting, because it reveals an attempt to try and tackle the ending of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, an effort to bridge the apparent gap between the ending and the question of Wilhelm's *Bildung*.

To better answer this question it is necessary to look at the *Bildungsroman*'s concern with the reader's *Bildung*, that important feature of the *Aufklärung*'s enterprise. Even if a moral genre, the *Bildungsroman* should not in any sense be seen as ethically prescriptive, and here one enters the field of ethical

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[41] Sagmo (1982), quoting Hermann August Korff, p. 27.
[42] 'Goethe [...] provides an ending, as is demanded by the conventions of novel fiction, but also suggests that *such* endings are really only the property of fictions'. See Swales (1978), p. 71; for Staiger's opinion, see Sagmo (1982), p. 29.

criticism, which says that the reader should help to define the genre, a definition is strongly related to the ethical "quality" of the reader's responses towards the fictional construct. Saariluoma makes a very valid and interesting point related to this matter by comparing *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* to Wieland's *Geschichte des Agathon*. For her, Agathon is a closed narrative, in which 'the narrator gives the reader a fixed and interpretative story (she calls it 'moralistic-pedagogical').[43] But she proceeds to consider that *Bildung* is never closed and that it is not finished when the narrative comes to an end.

Schiller, who valued classical order, said that the moral message of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* should have been defined more clearly, but this is up to the reader. It is not coincidental, then, that Saariluoma calls *Geschichte des Agathon* a story of the narrator and *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* a story of the protagonist and the reader.[44] The narrator of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehjahre* does not force meaning on the reader, he rather only helps guide her/him. In *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, as it will happen in *Der Zauberberg*, there is an open ending (though it is easier to speculate on Wilhelm's fate than on the protagonist of Mann's novel, as Wilhelm does not become involved in a war). It is up to the reader to follow that guiding light, if s/he considers it relevant to do so. Part of my interest in the *Bildungsroman* genre is related to its ethical contours and the

[43] This might also explain why it is *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* that is considered the prototype of all *Bildungsromane* and not *Geschichte des Agathon*, the oldest example of the genre.
[44] See Saariluoma (1985), p. 344ff.

moral growth of the protagonist, which can be seen as being there for the enlightenment, as it were, of the reader.

Bildung as the development of multiple faculties exists in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, and by the time the novel ends Wilhelm has attained it and is conscious of it. After all, he says in the novel's last few sentences that he feels as if he has gained a kingdom (in what might be symbolically seen as another claim at nobility). As was mentioned before, Jacobs says that Wilhelm's *Bildung* rests on duty-based ethics, and I also believe that Wilhelm's development is mainly an ethical one.[45]

Wilhelm can be held responsible for a few ethical failings: he is absent when his father, against whose wishes he had joined the theatre, dies; he unwillingly breaks Mariane's and Mignon's hearts (and even thinks he has caused Mariane's death); it is even said that he causes the count's fear of death and the countess's ilness. Many of these failings are involuntary, admittedly, hence self-awareness is even more necessary for Wilhelm to take others into consideration, at least to prevent tragic and accidental misfortunes like those mentioned above; and this even if there are no rational constructs strong enough to encompass all the variety that exists in life.[46] Yet Wilhelm must at least be

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[45] So, too, does Saariluoma, as chapter 3.9.1 of her book is called 'Die Turmgesellschaft und Wilhelms Entwicklung zum Ideal der *ethisch-praktischen* Lebensbeherrschung' (my emphasis).

[46] As Reiss says, Goethe did not subscribe to the *Aufklärung*'s 'belief in a fixed plan of life'. For further discussion, see Reiss (1969), p. 103.

aware of whatever he can control. At the end of the novel the Abbé says that nature has set Wilhelm free and that his *Lehrjahre* are finished because he takes responsibility for his son Felix. This means that Wilhelm is prepared to go into society at large. So he takes responsibility for Felix's education, as he had already done for Mignon's. Taking control of events, Wilhelm also proposes to Therese and writes to Werner to let him know that he wishes to improve his estate.[47] Like Werner, Wilhelm is going into practical activity, but with a difference: 'Während Werner sich wegen des egoistischen Gewinns bemüht, Wilhelm das für allgemeinnützliche Ziele tut.'[48]

Wilhelm has strong ethical concerns, and the further example of Natalie, his wife-to-be, only strengthens the dispositions of his own self. It is she who allows him to overcome the state of confusion in which he finds himself almost until the end of the novel. Wilhelm, then, is not like Werner, nor could he ever be, rather he tries to be more like Lothario, the character who is one of the novel's principal examples of altruism. Wilhelm had already taken care of Mignon and the Harper; he had paid Melina's troupe for their losses after the robbery; he had even wanted to help the nation's education by means of the theatre, because talents must be *gebildet* in many, not only in a few.[49] In a sense, it can be said that Wilhelm always had in him the inclination to behave ethically,

[47] Things do not work out and Wilhelm ends up marrying Natalie and fulfilling his innermost *Sehnsucht*. It is interesting to note that he never truly loved Therese and that his proposal to her was a product of his understanding only; yet reason alone, again, is never enough.
[48] Saariluoma (1985), p. 319
[49] Reiss considers that Wilhelm's idea of the theatre was in itself ethical, as it appealed to man's 'inner thoughts and yearnings. Hence the theatre appears to him moral'. See Reiss (1969), p. 112.

though that inclination had never become a conscious and guiding effort on his part as it does by the end of the novel: 'Die "neue" Einstellung zum Leben, die sich Wilhelm in Übereinstimmung mit der Lebensansicht der Turmgesellschaft (aber nicht von ihr, sondern von seiner eigenen Natur geführt) aneignet, ist auf der Ebene seiner Tätigkeit nicht neu, obwohl sie das für sein Selbstbewußtsein ist.'[50] Wilhelm's path to self-awareness, that significant notion of *Bildung*, is as complete as it could ever be (it might be said that it never truly is). As it were, the inner gold he has inside shows no more traces of impurities; it has been fully heightened. All the mistakes Wilhelm commits from now on are his responsibility and he accepts this outlook with maturity.[51]

In the end, Wilhelm's *Bildungsprozeß* leaves nothing out, since, as the Abbé says to him, even mistakes contribute to it; they are part of the act of seeking, both inside and outside: 'Alles, was uns begegnet, läßt Spuren zurück, alles trägt unmerklich zu unserer Bildung bei.' (WML, 422) Wilhelm's formation is not only due to maturity, it is the application of his inner law to the world — in Kantian terms, he becomes simultaneously legislator and bound by law —, it is a moral experience that proceeds from looking within, as in the confessions of the beautiful soul, subsequently "adjusted" to social reality, in an ongoing process of development of *Persönlichkeit* that is so dear to *Bildung*: 'Im glücklichen Ende

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[50] Saariluoma (1985), p. 324

[51] Wilhelm, who blamed many of his problems on fate, abandons that somewhat impulsive, *stürmer* tendency and sees that he too is to blame. His newfound Humanism rejects the belief in a life-guiding *Genie*, which is very important in terms of the *Aufklärung*'s ideas. For a detailed analysis of Wilhelm's idea of the concept of 'fate', see chapter 3.9.1.1 of Saariluoma's study.

der Lehrjahre wird so das neuhumanistische Bildungsideal nicht der sozial nützlichen Tätigkeit aufgeopfert, sondern diese beiden fallen hier zusammen.'[52] An ethical balance is achieved, and Wilhelm does not need to sacrifice his self to enter society. As Steven Lukes aptly remarks, German individualism does not imply 'isolation and social dissolution', but rather encompasses both 'individual self-fulfilment and [...] the organic unity of individual and society'. German individualism is thus entirely compatible with ethical socialism, and therein lies its uniqueness.[53] This means that internal and external factors can be fused, until they are no longer separable, or distinguishable.

There is, however, a sequence, in the sense that inner *Bildung* comes first, the self's clarification of consciousness, and it is never enough to stress the importance of the self when it comes to ethical issues: 'We are not selves in the way that we are organisms. [...] We are only selves insofar as we move in a certain space of [moral] questions, as we seek and find an orientation to the good.'[54] But there is no sense of hierarchy, only a union between self and world that does none the less allow for continuous and potentially infinite tension between them, a drive for inclusion that Moretti has called the typical eighteenth century 'comfort of equilibrium'.[55] *Bildung* is, as was already stressed, a *Werdegang*, a process of becoming; it is a matter of *becoming*, not of *being*.

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[52] Ibid., p. 324
[53] Steven Lukes, *Individualism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973), p. 22
[54] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 34
[55] See Moretti (1985), 135.

The *Bildungsroman* concerns itself with conduct towards others (the outer factor) out of a personal determination (the inner factor), allowing the moral thus created to be free from society's more negative and materialistic constraints. The self does not accept everything from the outside, only what is in agreement, as in the case of the beautiful soul, with an inner law. The *Bildungsprozeß*, then, is a choice and a way to live in the world from an ethical and moral higher plane — as Saariluoma puts it, a 'Koordinationspunkt' to relate to —, which again leads to the definite answer to the question whether *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* is indeed a *Bildungsroman.*

Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre's influence on future *Bildungsromane* — the similarities with *Der Zauberberg*, for example, are striking — indicates a set of features that can be found in Goethe's novel and a set of ethical questions and perspectives that the reader can profit from. The question of the protagonist looking for that point of co-ordination and for an interpretation of his life and of life in general, an interpretation that turns out to be an ethical one, can also be seen as a true *Bildungsromanproblematik.* Saariluoma also considers *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* to be a *Bildungsroman*, even if not a *Charakterroman* in the sense that the 'Blanckenburgische' tradition has it, and can be wholly endorsed:

> In den **Lehrjahren** haben wir einen Bildungsroman gefunden. Der Held mit seiner echten weltanschaulichen Problematik, die als Orientierungsschwierigkeit in seinem eigenen Leben erscheint, ist hier der Mittelpunkt des Romans. Aber diese Problematik, eine

> Bildungsromanproblematik, wird im Laufe des Romans gelöst, bzw. am Ende wird gezeigt, dass der Held in den Prozess der Lösung eingetreten ist, in dem er zu grösseren Beherrschung des Lebens sowohl in der Erkenntnis als in der Praxis fortschreiten wird. Dieser Prozess ist allerdings ein unendlicher.[56]

The narrator calls Wilhelm 'our friend' (the same happens in *Der Zauberberg*) from the beginning of the novel, and the consequence of this fact is that Wilhelm is brought closer to the reader. The continuous joining of reader and protagonist explains the open character of the *Bildungsroman* genre, because the reader must complete the narrative, linking what the protagonist has gone through in his interior development with the new exterior conditions of his life.[57] *Bildung* is almost equated with life, in the sense that it is an endless enterprise even if one is on the right track. The reader finds a *Koordinationspunkt* to try to understand, as much as the protagonist does, certain realities about life, a life that none the less rejects categorisations and absolute interpretations. Borrowing Goethe's notion, it could be said that, in a way, Wilhelm will always be 'Wilhelm Schüler'. And it could also be said that the alertness that this situation implies is forever a condition of *Bildung*.

Wilhelm gradually moves out of the shell of his own subjectivity and accepts responsibility for others, social responsibility, which is the concluding

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[56] Saariluoma, p. 342

[57] It is this emphasis on the reader which Sagmo believes contributes to the critical debate surrounding the novel: 'Die Geschichte der Deutung der "Lehrjahre" ist deshalb nicht nur die Geschichte eines Streites um das richtige Verständnis des Gegenstandes, sondern darin spiegeln sich auch die Auffassungen der verschiedenen Interpreten und ihrer jeweiligen Gegenwart von "Bildung" wider.' See Sagmo (1982), p. 33.

goal of the *Bildungsprozeß*, as Sagmo notes: 'Wilhelm muß auch von seiner idealistischen Höhe, von der aus die wahre Beschaffenheit nicht mehr erkennbar ist, hinunterstürzen.' Yet Sagmo also notes that Wilhelm's ideals have a place in the "real world": 'Wilhelms Weg ist gangbar, weil er im einheitsphilosophischen Sinne die Welt in sich trägt.'[58] If a purely rational and idealistic approach to life is limited, as ideas must not be allowed to become distanced from concrete reality, it must be remembered that the *Bildungsroman* is a novel of ideas, and that the tension between them contributes strongly to the *Bildungsprozeß*.

Yet there is no single idea, no one concept that can sum up all the complexities of existence: 'Der Inhalt des Romans ist durch keine "Idee" ausdrückbar, ebensowenig wie das Leben es ist: der Roman scheint umgekehrt zeigen zu wollen, dass das Leben umfangreicher ist als jede einzelne Idee davon.'[59] There is no one concept to bind all concepts, there are rather many, all complementing one another, and here lies the tension between them.

One cannot look at *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* searching for definite viewpoints. It is simply a lighthouse, a beacon of idealistic optimism. A more reductive view diminishes the final result. As Sagmo notes: 'In dieser Hinsicht sind die "Lehrjahre" Goethes optimistischtes Werk; [...] und man ist versucht,

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[58] Ibid., p. 236
[59] Saariluoma (1985), p. 346

diese Eigentümlickeit dem Einfluß Schillers zuzuschreiben.'[60] Much can be traced back to Schiller, then, not least because few have read the novel more perceptively.

2. A season of ideal heights: *Bildung* in an elevated sphere of being

> Art is civilization's single most significant device for learning what must be affirmed and what must be denied.
>
> John Gardner

Adalbert Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* (1857) occupies a unique place in the *Bildungsroman* tradition, and is certainly one of the most peculiar novels in literature. The novel's protagonist, Heinrich Drendorf, undergoes a process of *Bildung* that is completely undisturbed by — or even aware of — outward troubles or events. Young Heinrich thus develops his personality without any exterior agitation, in an organic unfolding so harmonious that it makes this *Bildungsroman* truly unique. In the other two *Bildungsromane* analysed in this chapter, the belief in a natural order of things and ultimate meaning in the relation between self and world is present, albeit with different degrees of intensity, yet *Der Nachsommer* is the only one of the three novels where the universe itself is so contained and concordant that the affirmative conclusion of Heinrich's *Bildung* is never in doubt.

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[60] Sagmo (1982), p. 237

Like Wilhelm Meister, Heinrich comes from an affluent bourgeois family and has no material worries. However, his early years or his adulthood never allow for the same convulsions that Wilhelm or, even more so, the protagonist of *Der grüne Heinrich*, see themselves in. [61] Order, the authority of the rules of the parental house, are an influence on Heinrich from early on. In the Drendorf's household, everyone and everything has its appointed place, something that is calmly yet peremptorily assured by Heinrich's father. This stress on order and organisation, which leads to harmony, remains a feature of the novel, and is the sum and substance both of Heinrich's personality and of his *Bildungsweg*, as Mayer notes, however passive and dull that might make Heinrich appear in the eyes of the reader: 'Von Anfang an ist dieser Jüngling ohne sittlichen Makel, überaus lernwillig und bildsam, ohne kritischen Vorbehalt gegenüber Elternhaus, Erziehern und Freunden. Seine Entwicklung verläuft unauffällig und still, ohne schroffe Zäsuren.'[62]

Peacefully at one with what surrounds him, Heinrich is never really, seriously, at odds with any external factors, so the development of his inner self is thus the focal point of the text. His path to self-cultivation is orderly; each new

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[61] It is curious to note that the protagonists of the *Bildungsroman* often lead an untroubled existence in economic terms; in the novels considered in this thesis, and with the exception of the protagonist of *Der grüne Heinrich*, that can certainly be said, and is something which enables the protagonists not to have to look for work and thus lets them focus, as it were, on their *Bildung* endeavours. This is a feature the *Bildungsroman* certainly does not share with the American narrative of initiation. Jacobs considers that this is even more true of Heinrich than of Wilhelm Meister, who, by the end of Goethe's novel, at least wanted to produce something in the world: '[Im *Nachsommer*] erscheint der Gedanke an Erwerb, an bezahlte Arbeit nicht: der Held lebt in so wohlhabenden und ungefährdeten Verhältnissen, daß ihm diese banale Frage und ihre mühsame Auflösung erspart bleiben.' See Jacobs (1972), p. 189.

[62] Mayer (1992), p. 131

stage calmly and slowly builds on a previous one, in a somewhat rhythmical cadence. So, delicately and patiently, layer by layer, Heinrich's self is revealed, as are the principles that underlie existence and the motion of the world. There is never a conflict between inner and outer realities in Heinrich's *Bildung*, because his occupations repeatedly allow him to see in the world confirmation of his inner self. When young, and following an inner urge, Heinrich decides to become a natural scientist. He has no specific reason for doing so, no parental advice or specific experience to draw on; but inside he feels that this choice might be of importance: 'Mir schwebte auch nicht ein besonderer Nutzen vor, den ich durch mein Bestreben erreichen wollte, sondern es war mir nur, als müßte ich so tun, als liege etwas innerlich Gültiges und Wichtiges in der Zukunft.' (NS, 17) Without responding to that inner urge, and as Eric A. Blackall says, all the individual can aspire to is 'a cold and uninspired efficiency', something which is certainly not the aspiration of a fully-fledged *Bildung*.[63]

The stress is thus very much laid on the individual and his inner calling. Heinrich's following of this inner calling rather than other, utilitarian considerations represents an inalienable part of his *Bildungsprozeß*. The self-cultivation that is at the heart of the *Bildungsroman* genre thus proceeds in *Der Nachsommer* from the gradual unfolding of Heinrich's inner qualities, peacefully achieved through contemplation and rational exercise. The pursuing of one's own

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[63] Eric A. Blackall, *Adalbert Stifter: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), p. 5

dispositions is an axiom of the novel from early on, and doing otherwise is even seen as having adverse cosmological implications.

This emphasis on inner aspects makes the "action" of *Der Nachsommer* infinitely less dynamic than that of the other *Bildungsromane* under consideration in this thesis. Stifter's novel, with its repetitive cadence, is a consummate novel of ideas set in a restrained space: 'Nicht in der großen Welt [...] empfängt Heinrich Drendorf die entscheidenden Eindrücke seines Lebens, sondern im Umkreis eines Landhauses, durch den Umgang mit einer Menschengemeinschaft von feinster Lebensart und Kultur.'[64] Only in this confined and refined atmosphere can ideas that elevate man be pursued and understood by means of observation and speculation.

It is not that the outside world is completely shut out, it is just that, quite simply, its existence is never really an issue in the framework of *Der Nachsommer*. It is never relevant in comparison to the alternative existence of the *Rosenhaus*. The owner of this house, Freiherr von Risach, who becomes Heinrich's mentor, is in contact with the surrounding agrarian community, yet the reader seldom learns anything specific about the neighbours, because the *Rosenhaus*, Castalia-like, is a world apart, a self-sufficient, almost transcendent, reality.

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[64] Ludwig Arnold, *Stifters "Nachsommer" als Bildungsroman: Vergleich mit Goethes "Wilhelm Meister" and Kellers "Grünem Heinrich"* (Gießen: Kindt, 1938), p. 24

The ignoring of the external world leads to situations of involuntary comical effect: as Swales notices, Heinrich's two-year tour of Europe that occurs near the end of the novel is condensed into one paragraph.[65] The *Rosenhaus*, due to the life he can lead there, is the preferred and logical choice for Heinrich's dwellings. As in his parents' house, order rules in every corner, each room of the *Rosenhaus* has its purpose, as does each thing, and all things and spaces of the house are beautiful and proportional without ever being pretentious. The *Rosenhaus* is the reflection of Risach's personality, in that nothing is out of place in either of them. The physical world in which Risach moves is carefully constructed to correspond to his inner nature, the order that rules the house matches Risach's beliefs. *Gestalt* is here order imposed on the physical world according to one's own inner nature.

Risach is not a teacher-figure for Heinrich — he is, in fact, rather reluctant to offer any kind of pedagogical guidance —, but an example for him to follow and a foreshadowing of Heinrich's own *Bildung*: 'Insofern ist Risach für Heinrich keine Erzieherfigur mit heftigen fordernden pädagogischen Ambitionen.'[66] His role is similar to the role that the society of the tower has in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, in that, and in agreement with the organic conception of the *Bildungsprozeß*, Risach only "enlightens" Heinrich when this

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[65] See Swales (1978), p. 76f, and Stifter (1956), 4, 729f.
[66] Rolf Selbmann, *Der deutsche Bildungsroman* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984), p. 145

one begins to see what is already in his innermost nature. Risach is aware of Heinrich's potential, but he also knows that Heinrich must discover that potential by himself, as when he starts to develop an interest in art: 'Ich habe gar nie gezweifelt, daß Ihr zu dieser Allgemeinheit gelangen werdet, weil schöne Kräfte in Euch sind, die noch auf keinen Afterweg geleitet sind und nach Erfüllung streben.' (NS, 346)[67] In the *Rosenhaus*, even if under Risach's guidance, everybody is free to follow their own inclinations. Being true to them is the only way to achieve one's own expectations, the only way to achieve satisfaction in the practical sphere; this is the ethos of practical activity in *Der Nachsommer*.

Due to his behaviour in his previous romantic association with Mathilde, Risach has none the less a shadow in his past, the only shadow that hangs over the harmony of his house. He decided in his youth not to pursue his love for Mathilde at her parents' request, yet even out of this experience Risach emerges a more complete individual: 'In Goethean terms, *Entsagung* (renunciation) has led Risach and Mathilde into a purer state of being. The original intensity of feeling has been transmuted into the intensity of a way of life in which the *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa* are supremely fused.'[68]

[67] Arnold considers that both the society of the tower and Risach present examples to follow, ideal tendencies that also live *in* the protagonist. The purpose of both Risach and the society of the tower is thus to help the protagonist to know more about himself. See Arnold (1938), p. 62.

[68] Martin and Erika Swales, *Adalbert Stifter: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 109. Blackall further considers that the shadow of Risach's past does not cloud the present, for his and Mathilde's story is told in retrospect. See Blackall (1948), p. 17.

In the quiet grandeur of the *Rosenhaus* Heinrich will discover enough not to make the same mistake in his relationship with Natalie. Risach never expresses to Heinrich the expectations he has for him and Natalie; he lets events take their natural (and inevitable) course, despite his certainties on the matter. Again, Risach never attempts to influence Heinrich in any way. But the story of Risach's past can help Heinrich's gradual development, as he and Natalie can live their Indian summer and, unlike Risach and Mathilde, not squander the summer before it. The path in front of Heinrich and Natalie can be informed by Risach's past, and it is the best path the individual can hope for; this is the morality at the heart of *Der Nachsommer*: 'In human terms, [the gradual unfolding of the natural world] means the embedding of man in the continuity of the sacred, eternal sequence of family life. If man can be absorbed into that gradualness, then he may become part of the self-renewing whole that is creation itself.'[69] Risach's moral conception is one that Heinrich shares, and is the ultimate result of his *Bildungsprozeß*.

In the confined universe of *Der Nachsommer*, there is a sense that the *Bildungsprozeß* can only be consummated within the unproblematic life that Heinrich is able to lead in Risach's *Rosenhaus*, even if that ultimately turns *Der Nachsommer* into a somewhat bloodless novel. Swales considers that this is the only way found by Stifter to solve the tension between the *Nacheinander* and the *Nebeneinander*: 'For Stifter, there cannot be even an approximation toward

[69] Swales (1978), p. 79

human wholeness within the framework of everyday society. Accordingly, he created in [*Der Nachsommer*] an alternative world, one not less, but more confined than the society he so utterly repudiated.'[70] The protagonist of *Der Nachsommer* is thus spared any factual confrontation with the world; as an introvert, Heinrich is frequently ill at ease when in urban circles, especially around young men his own age, being more adept at understanding nature than people. *Der Nachsommer*, furthermore, is a novel concerning small societies that dwell away from big cities. Only with his family and with his acquaintances from the *Rosenhaus* can Heinrich truly be himself.

The *Bildungsroman* is sometimes considered a utopian genre, and *Der Nachsommer* entirely confirms this viewpoint, more so than most other examples of the genre. In a world which was becoming progressively more disconcerting and with pessimism consequently becoming more and more widespread in literary creation, this was Stifter's response, in the form of a secluded world where self-cultivation could take place unhindered and without any threats: 'Daher [um die Universalien humaner Bildung zu beabsichtigen] gestaltete er [Stifter] eine quasi-geschichtslose Sonderwelt, einen ästhetisch strukturierten Bildungskosmos, der als normative Utopie die negativ bewertete zeitgenössische

[70] Ibid., p. 85. The ordered world depicted in the novel was Stifter's response to the degeneration of his time, especially after the failed bourgeois revolution of 1848. This certainly explains the distance between the self and the world at large in *Der Nachsommer*, and the refusal of this novel to be a *Zeitroman*, signalling a further recoil of the educated bourgeoisie into the private sphere. The individual alone bears the burden of *Bildung*. Unlike Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich*, there are almost no references to the historical actualities of the mid-nineteenth century. All that the reader is made aware of is the decline of the age, which is considered materialistic and an enemy of the concepts of humanity so dear to *Bildung*.

Wirklichkeit verdrängt.'[71] The self is integrated not in a finite human society, but in a transcendent order.

All worldly things have limitations, as Heinrich learns. His initial devotion to the scientific reality of the world is abandoned for art, or, perhaps, complemented by it. This change occurs when Heinrich is posing scientific questions to himself about the processes and beginnings of the natural world, which soon leads him to meditate on the purpose of life. He finds out that the aridity of science, its inability to answer problems that lie at the heart of human experience, will never let him learn truths that can only be discovered by other, no lesser, means:

> Solche Fragen stimmten mich ernst und feierlich, und es war, als wäre in mein Wesen ein inhaltreicheres Leben gekommen. Wenn ich gleich weniger sammelte und zusammentrug als früher, so war es doch, als würde ich in meinem Innern bei weitem mehr gefördert als in vergangenen Zeiten. (NS, 297)

Heinrich's turning to art is thus related to the very essence of his being: as the human subject is considered the highest representation possible in art, Heinrich's devotion to the world is thus complemented by his devotion to people, which becomes the foundation of his love for Natalie.[72]

At least, that is the opinion of Risach: see Stifter (1956), 4, 265. For more on the historical frame in which the novel was written, see Mayer (1992), p. 121ff.

[71] Mayer (1992), p. 133

[72] Interestingly enough, Blackall locates Heinrich's progression from science to art to love in the protagonist's experience of *King Lear*. Heinrich not only becomes fascinated by Shakespeare — like Wilhelm Meister — and develops a keen interest in his plays, but he is also captivated by the girl in the theatre box who is weeping as he is. The sight of her awakens in him an interest for artistic depictions of the human face. This girl, of course, turns out to be Natalie, his future wife. This is another instance that

Heinrich's interest in the human sphere can be seen as something of an ethical progression — as far-fetched as that might appear — and is also an orientation towards the classical humanist concern of *Bildung* that leads to harmonious self-cultivation. When he devotes his attention to art, Heinrich sees artefacts somewhat scientifically at first, but he soon learns to appreciate their essence. The way in which he sees the marble statue, the *Marmorgestalt*, in the *Rosenhaus* is indicative of this change in him. Even the acquiring of emotion is a process, it ensues from a previous state.

Like the scientist, the artist may also not know all the answers to the secrets of creation, but, as the artist's concern is the human condition, s/he has thoughts and feelings that come closer to the secrets of the absolute. This is the qualitative difference between science and art, which does by no means imply that these two spheres should be separated.[73] Art is only more essential, as it were, to access fundamental human depths. The *Bildungsheld* can never be one-sided, specialised; as Risach says, if he wants one day to understand the absolute, he cannot mistake the part for the whole:

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proves that there is no space for coincidences in the confined and carefully wrought universe of *Der Nachsommer*. See Blackall (1948), p. 10.

[73] Attempts at a synthesis of these two fields are, after all, frequent in German literature, something which can be attributed to Goethe's influence; Stifter was aware of his "heritage": '[Ich bin] zwar kein Göthe aber einer aus seiner Verwandschaft.' In the case of *Der Nachsommer*, Blackall considers that the *cereus peruvianus* symbolises the complementary possibilities of science and art, as the cactus is seen as the blending of scientific knowledge and beauty. This critic further compares the development of the plant to the development of the human soul. See Blackall (1948), p. 320. Stifter quotation taken from Jacobs (1972), p. 188.

> Das Streben in einer Richtung legt dem Geiste eine Binde an, verhindert ihn, das Nebenliegende zu sehen, und führt ihn in das Abenteurliche. Später, wenn der Grund gelegt ist, muß der Mann sich wieder dem Einzigen zuwenden, wenn er irgendwie etwas Bedeutendes leisten soll. Er wird dann nicht mehr in das Einseitige verfallen. In der Jugend muß man sich allseitig üben, um als Mann gerade dann für das einzelne tauglich zu sein. (NS, 308)

Heinrich's progression, then, his nature, unfolds gradually, one meaningful step at a time, his path towards self-cultivation always determined, *organically* determined: 'Die Entwicklung ist so absolut auf das Ziel, den "höheren", den vollendeten Menschen, im Sinne der deutschen Klassik hin ausgerichtet, so rein von dem Ziel her bestimmt, daß die Entwicklung selbst als Gestalt erscheint, als ein in sich geschlossener Organismus.'[74] In this expansion — the chapter where Heinrich turns to art is, after all, called 'Erweiterung' — from the inanimate physical world to the human, Heinrich finds in both laws that command evolution and development, yet even this new stage is not final.

The infinity of God-given life, the absolute, cannot be reduced to man-made conventions. In earthly life, as mentioned above, love of people is the ultimate blessing. As in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Heinrich finds this in the woman he loves; Natalie, is, as Christine Oertel Sjögren notes, 'the living counterpart of the *Marmorgestalt*', the ultimate symbol of beauty and perfection in *Der Nachsommer*.[75]

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[74] (1938), p. 30

[75] Christine Oertel Sjögren, *The Marble Statue as Idea: Collected Essays on Adalbert Stifter's Der Nachsommer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 1. It is worth noting that this is

Heinrich's *Bildungsweg* is one of unrealistic ideal perfection, but unlike what happens in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and *Der grüne Heinrich*, a 'realistic tic' is never a concern in *Der Nachsommer*.[76] The novel's characters are often not even named: Heinrich and Risach spend several years together without addressing each other by their names, which they never ask each other. What they do recognise is each other's basic nature, so to speak, a noumenon that needs no designations. Behind Heinrich's individual path lies the drive towards self-cultivation, the attainment of noble values in a state of perfection, something as pure as marble. Heinrich and the other characters dwell in this state, they truly walk in beauty.

This idealism could not allow for any counter-balance in the novel. The serene perfection of the *Rosenhaus*, then, cannot be complete, as it lacks conflict, *imperfection*, but in the framework of the novel, harmony in life is the most important thing, from the most insignificant daily task to the most elevated philosophical and artistic speculation. Nothing else deserves consideration. This harmony is the only way to reach *Bildung*: '[*Der Nachsommer*'s] "idealism" is the sum-total of all highest forms of existence, presented *sub specie aeternitatis*, because any limitation, whether of time or of space, would necessarily involve

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not all that Wilhelm and Heinrich share: their wives, both symbols of perfection, also have the same name.

[76] The accusation of lack of verisimilitude, furthermore, was made against the novel since it was first published. See Mayer (1992), p. 122. Jacobs further thinks that the lack of any "real" opposition to Heinrich's endeavours is what renders the character psychologically flat and uninteresting. See Jacobs (1972), p. 192.

imperfection.'[77] As much as the people in the Apollinian *Rosenhaus* have to wear felt slippers to preserve the precious and immaculate marble floors, so too is the *nihil* too threatening to have a place in *Der Nachsommer* and must be kept at bay to preserve the ideal.[78] Therein lies the tension between inner development and exterior events, here made even more acute because of the absence of external demands.

The order controlling the world presented in *Der Nachsommer* reveals itself to be trans-empirical. It points to the absolute, to an ultimate ideal: God is never far from the mouths of the novel's characters and is seen as the final arbiter of man's fate. However selfish or individualistic it might appear to the reader, the personal conduct of an individual is not primarily concerned with other individuals: it does not have to be a social conduct, in that it is ultimately submitted only to the absolute. Taking care of his own individuality according to the universal order inside of him and in nature, the individual is, according to Risach (and also to the narrator and to Heinrich's father), only doing what is best for the world, however distant he is from it (as the characters of *Der Nachsommer* certainly are):

> Ich wiederhole, was wir oft gesagt haben und womit Euer ehrwürdiger Vater auch übereinstimmt, daß der Mensch seinen Lebensweg seiner selbst willen zur vollständigen Erfüllung seiner Kräfte wählen soll. Dadurch dient er auch dem Ganzen am besten, wie er nur immer dienen

[77] Blackall (1948), p. 8

[78] Sjögren even discovers in this behaviour an existential concern, a fear of the absurdity of and in life: 'The terror that seems to underly the forced serenity and compulsive orderliness of the *Rosenhaus* suggests a condition more familiar to modern readers than to those of Stifter's day.' See Sjögren (1972), p. 8.

> kann. Es wäre die schwerste Sünde, seinen Weg nur ausschließlich dazu zu wählen, wie man sich so oft ausdrückt, der Menschheit nützlich zu werden. (NS, 633)[79]

Right action occurs, then, if man's action is in agreement with the order within him, which also lies behind every small occurrence of the natural world. Nothing else is needed.

By committing himself as he does to his *Bildungsprozeß*, Heinrich is doing the best for a society that must, however, never be seen as his primary concern. There are no social ethics in *Der Nachsommer*, only a concept of a non-interventionist universal behaviour, as it were, that might help to maintain noble values — in isolation — in a time of social and political upheaval. The novel therefore presents only a partial image of perfection, one in suspended animation, almost, too distant from the smell and touch and look of things, as Mayer, too, notes: 'So schuf Stifter den utopischen Bildungsroman als typologisches Gesetzbuch des erkennenden und handelnden humanen Umgangs mit Welt, wohl wissend, daß seine normative Utopie keine Handlungsanweisung für die historisch-gesellschaftliche Wirklichkeit bieten konnte.'[80]

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[79] Risach's words echo the words Heinrich's father had said much earlier: 'Der Mensch sei nicht zuerst der menschlichen Gesellschaft wegen da, sondern seiner selbst willen. Und wenn jeder seiner selbst willen auf die beste Art da sei, so sei er es auch für die menschliche Gesellschaft.' (NS, 17) This echoes Kant's stance on the relationship between the individual and society, as seen in chapter I (see note 15).

[80] Mayer (1992), p. 136

In terms of what is left for the reader, perhaps Erika and Martin Swales describe the novel best when they say that 'just as Risach's world exists in willed isolation from the common affairs of men, so the novel is removed from the common world of reader expectations'.[81] Seen in the light of ethical criticism, and in comparison with the other *Bildungsromane* analysed in this thesis, *Der Nachsommer* can be defined as pointing somewhere else. Heinrich only fully develops when he leaves behind purely empirical and analytical considerations and moves into the sphere of aesthetics. Even then, he must learn that there is much more to art objects than their external features; he must discover their inner beauty, their unique purity, as in the *Gestalt* of the marble statue. This transcendent, noumenal reality exists throughout the world and is seen as being as real as what is visible. This is why the teleology of *Der Nachsommer* has theological overtones: the soul of man is, through the medium of time, 'steadily and uninterruptedly' moving towards the absolute, towards God, the decisive guarantor of order, the keeper of time itself.[82]

[81] Swales and Swales (1984), p. 108. Blackall, in his turn, says that the reader can benefit from the values and memory of the place — the *Rosenhaus* — where the action takes place. See Blackall (1948), p. 18. Klaus Amann also thinks that the didactic activation of the reader is the main objective of *Der Nachsommer*. See Amann, *Adalbert Stifters "Nachsommer": Studie zur didaktischen Struktur des Romans* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1977), p. 53.

[82] Blackall (1948), p. 311. Mayer also considers that Stifter's vision of the world is based on religious notions: see Mayer (1992), p. 132.

3. 'I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love': the pursuit of equilibrium in *Der grüne Heinrich*

> Widerspruch von außen und von innen war bis dahin sein ganzes Leben. — Es kömmt darauf an, wie diese Widersprüche sich lösen werden.
>
> Karl Philipp Moritz, *Anton Reiser*

The reason why *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, *Der Nachsommer* and Gottfried Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich* have been chosen to illustrate the evolution and peculiarities of the *Bildungsroman* is that these three novels, though different, are among the most representative examples of the genre. Jacobs and Mayer are some of the critics who consider them as such: the three novels figure invariably and prominently in their studies of the *Bildungsroman*.[83]

In the discussions about which novels should belong to the genre, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*'s place is secure due to its prototypical status, and if critics sometimes disagree on which other novels should be incorporated, *Der Nachsommer* and *Der grüne Heinrich* also enjoy an inalienable status within the canon, considering, as Saariluoma notes, their relation with Goethe's novel: 'Die bedeutendsten "Bildungsromane" der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts sind Kellers Grüner Heinrich und Stifters Nachsommer, in denen der Einfluss der Goetheschen Bildungsidee deutlich ist.'[84] It makes sense, then, to see these novels, as Arnold sees them, as 'Glieder einer Kette', links in a chain.[85]

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[83] See Jacobs (1972) and Mayer (1992).
[84] Saariluoma (1985), p. 351
[85] Arnold (1938), p. 5

This does not mean that these two novels are simple imitations of the Goethean model, as it is certainly questionable if mere copies of other works can survive the test of time in literature. Relations of intertextuality are noticeable: with *Der Nachsommer*, as just seen, there can be no talk of simple duplication, only of inspiration; and the same holds true for *Der grüne Heinrich* (1879-80), which has its own singularities.[86] From all three, for example, this last novel is certainly the one offering the most complete and compelling portrait of the protagonist's childhood, which is one of unsettling intensity.[87] As a child, Heinrich Lee, the protagonist and narrator of the novel, is strongly imaginative, with a powerful tendency to fantasise about his experiences, and this is something which makes the description of the world he inhabits a true and accurate reflection of the world as seen through the eyes of a child.

The portrait of Heinrich as a child is realistic, more than that, it is psychologically accurate: despite the presence of an older narrator — an older Heinrich —, the child's motivations, his trains of thought and his actions reflect the often capricious nature of children. Heinrich's behaviour as a child is irresponsible, in fact it is more immoral than amoral, or innocent, but it also lets

[86] There are two versions of *Der grüne Heinrich*: the earlier (1854-55) was a third-person narrative and much darker than the later version, as the protagonist died of sorrow caused by the death of his mother. As Selbmann notes, the second version is less sombre, and more of a *Bildungsroman* in the traditional, more optimistic sense: 'Mit der zweiten Fassung und ihrer durchgehaltenen Ich-Perspektive nähert sich Keller wieder stärker den Traditionen des Bildungsromans an, wie auch durch das versöhnliche Ende, die Andeutung von Bildungszielen in den Kapitelüberschriften und die konsequente Ausrichtung auf konventionellere Lesererwartungen.' See Selbmann (1984), p. 142.

[87] Swales (1978), p. 92

the reader envisage the character's future and frequent lack of concern for the consequences of his reveries and misdeeds. Heinrich's imaginative hyperactivity also works as an escape from reality, especially from the unforgiving experiences he has in school and with boys his own age.

Social critique, or the critique of the institutions that were the very backbone of society, also stands out from an early stage in *Der grüne Heinrich*, in spite of the import given to Heinrich's imagination. Consequently, the aspect of withdrawal from the world that exists in *Der Nachsommer*, and to a lesser extent in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, is hardly a feature of Keller's novel. The attitude of Heinrich, both as character and as narrator, towards school, for instance, illustrates that critique well, as does, in particular, the critique of organised religion, which is a cause of torment for Heinrich since his earliest reminiscences, and constitutes with school the two most important formative institutions of the time; as Selbmann notes: '[Frühe Erfahrungen bauen in Heinrich] eine tiefe Skepsis gegenüber standardisiertem Bildungsgut.'[88] As he strongly reacts against his common lot, Heinrich's *Bildungsweg* consequently becomes strongly individualistic, and this for good and bad; it will be individualistic to an extreme, because of the radical subjective traits of his personality, as whatever is exterior to Heinrich's nature is always conditioned by those traits.

[88] Selbmann (1984), p. 140

Fatherless, Heinrich spends most of his childhood in considerable and careless freedom. Expelled from school, he soon devotes his attention to art, as he conforms to his inner longings and sets out to be an artist, certainly an activity where his imagination could be of service to him and, most of all, take a definite shape. Heinrich works hard to achieve his goal.[89] The painter Römer becomes Heinrich's master and instils discipline in him after Heinrich's initial hopeless endeavours with painting.

Römer teaches Heinrich what Richard R. Ruppel calls 'ethical painting', something which is said to mark the very beginning — however meagre this evidence might appear — of Heinrich's own ethical progression: 'Was daran ethisch [wie man malt] ist, ist, daß Heinrich durch harte und disziplinierte Arbeit nicht nur die Kunst mimetisch-realistischer Abbildung lernt, sondern auch lernt, seine Einbildungskraft zu kontrollieren. Er lernt geistige Selbstbeherrschung.'[90] Regardless of these considerations — as it appears to me that it takes Heinrich longer to control his strong imagination —, the protagonist's decision to become an artist is none the less an important stage in his formation, even if he eventually has to give up his dream of being a painter. Just as Wilhelm Meister comes to realise that he was not meant to be an actor, so Heinrich sees that he possesses no

[89] Heinrich actually has to work to earn his living and he does undergo a spell of need and destitution, which is quite a difference when compared to the other *Bildungsromane* being considered in the thesis.
[90] Richard R. Ruppel, 'Gottfried Kellers Ethik im Zusammenhang mit ästhetischen, religiösen und historischen Aspekten seiner Kunst', in *Gottfried Keller: Elf Essays zu seinem Werk*, ed. Hans Wysling (Zurich: Neue Zürcher, 1990), p. 65

true artistic talent.[91] This constitutes the great crisis of his life, yet, as happens in Wilhelm's case, it is also the key for Heinrich to accept his own limitations: Heinrich completes another stage of his *Bildungsprozeß* and can as a result move on to an ensuing stage.

All of Heinrich's endeavours in life had tended to lead him to stray further away from society and into his egotist and subjective individualism, but he ends up concluding, rationally and judiciously, that living in cooperation with others is the true measure of the individual's character: the goal of *Bildung* is to accommodate the *gebildet* individual into society, and so, in the end, Heinrich becomes active within his community. Socially involved, politically aware, his work can bear fruits that have an influence on other people's lives and on his own. Just as with Schiller, whose whole conduct Heinrich considered exemplary: 'Will ich nun [...] ein Beispiel wirkungsreicher Arbeit, die zugleich ein wahres und vernünftiges Leben ist, betrachten, so ist es das Leben und Wirken Friedrich Schillers.' (DGH, 648) For Heinrich, the extent of Schiller's achievement was such that its fruits assisted the whole of Germany, every person benefiting from Schiller's wisdom and experience, even after the writer's death.

In the end, Heinrich's *Bildungsprozeß* gains strong ethical contours, as it evolves into the service of others; declaredly disclosing his interest in man as a

[91] As Arnold notes, interest in art, albeit in different degrees, is a constant in the three novels considered in this chapter: 'Der grüne Heinrich ist also wie Wilhelm Meister ausübender Künstler, nicht nur Kunstfreund wie Heinrich Drendorf.' See Arnold (1938), p. 37.

social being to the count, Heinrich goes into public service, which is what gives ultimate meaning to his life. Like Wilhelm Meister, Heinrich gives up his artistic ambitions, but he learns how to be useful to others. Unlike Wilhelm's case, however, where only the desire and the plan to do so are expressed, the reader does not have to speculate on the true nature of Heinrich's activities after he defines his course in life. The text validates his path by actually describing his activities after he reaches a certain stage of his *Bildungsprozeß*:

> Etwa ein Jahr später besorgte ich die Kanzlei eines kleinen Oberamtes, welches an dasjenige grenzte, worin das alte Heimatdorf lag. Hier [...] befand [ich] mich in einer Mittelschicht zwischen dem Gemeindewesen und der Staatsverwaltung, so daß ich den Einblick nach unten und oben gewann und lernte, wohin die Dinge gingen und woher sie kamen. (DGH, 849)

Thus seen, none of the phases of Heinrich's formation is lost, each appears in a sequence, and his life gains a sense of continuity. Even if Heinrich soon becomes disappointed with the populace and with the limitations of his own occupation, there is evidence in the last few pages of the novel that his *Bildungsprozeß*, however erratically, still unfolds organically, in that each phase is seen as giving meaning to a previous one, no matter how hopeless the previous phase might have appeared at the time. Judith's return in the end of the novel, which gives meaning and a sense of continuity to Heinrich's younger years, is certainly important for the ultimate assertion of steadiness that exists in the novel.

Agreeing with this sense of harmonious progression, *Der grüne Heinrich* ends up following the *Bildungsroman* tradition: when a disbelieving Heinrich, in conversation with the count, questions the validity of the course his life has taken, especially the value and the meaning of his artistic activity, the count, who intends to keep a sketchbook that comprises the evidence of that activity, helps Heinrich realise that the legacy of those years can be seen as valuable: '"Mögen Sie die künstleriche Laufbahn fortsetzen oder nicht", sagte er [der Graf], "so werden mir die Bilder fast gleich wert bleiben [...] als Wegezeichen eines Entwicklungsganges [...] oder Ergänzung ihrer Jugendgeschichte".' (DGH, 762) What the count does is understand that Heinrich's path is a progression, and — in what is reminiscent the words of the Abbé to Wilhelm — he recognises the value of diverse facets of experience to Heinrich's *Bildungsprozeß*, even less positive experiences.

What follows from this, and as frequently happens in other *Bildungsromane*, is that self-cultivation occurs as a process, each occurrence, inner or external, leaving a trace, everything contributing to the protagonist's *Bildung*, to his assuming of a different *Gestalt*. In Heinrich's case, and by committing himself to the common good, what ultimately happens, as Selbmann notices, is that the narrative shows its circular character, as Heinrich ends up following the example of his father: '[Im Leben Heinrichs Vaters] Bildung meint [...] praktische Bildungsarbeit in der "Tiefe des Volkes."'[92] Committed to the

[92] Selbmann (1984), p. 138

social, collective good, Heinrich finds a means to solve the crisis of his life. But he does not make his choice because of selfish reasons; his is an option that follows the acknowledgement of his possibilities and particularly of his responsibilities towards society, just as his father had done before him. Heinrich's father was a practical man, a man of work and deeds and not of hollow words and endless fantasies. Heinrich's egotism, in turn, was caused by the overwhelming influence that his subjectivity and imagination had on his life, and that was the error of his ways, when he was still unfit to follow the example of his father, his earliest role model.

If Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* shows a penchant for inner development and containment, *Der grüne Heinrich* shows that introspectiveness must be moderated with a healthy dose of reality, and Keller's novel consequently moves towards the pattern of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. What *Der Nachsommer* throughout and *Der grüne Heinrich* at some stages represent are two situations that exemplify, to borrow Sagmo's terminology, the extremes of image without substance and inwardness without actuality. So somehow like Wilhelm, and very much unlike Heinrich Drendorf, Heinrich Lee often errs, but the significance of his mistakes — even his own exaggerated imaginative tendencies — to the whole of his *Bildungsprozeß* should not be lost.

The final stage of Heinrich's *Bildungsprozeß*, if one sees Heinrich as following in the paternal footsteps, can then be defined as the achievement of

balance between inner and outer factors, the ultimate goal, after all, of many a *Bildungsroman*. In this sense, and as Jacobs says, *Der grüne Heinrich* qualifies as a quintessential example of the genre: 'Der Kampf um ein balanciertes Verhältnis zur Realität und um die Überwindung der subjektivistischen Isolierung ist traditionelles Thema des Bildungsromans.'[93]

Due to the influence of his imagination in his life, the green Heinrich's conduct is often partial and unbalanced, something which, breeding vegetative passivity, immensely increases his propensity to make the wrong decisions in life. Heinrich is often incapable of connecting with the world of events, because his inner nature cannot agree with what surrounds him; and when it does, Heinrich cannot act. This is at its most (and painfully) obvious when Heinrich is just incapable of proposing to Dortchen Schönfund: 'In spite of his many potentialities, Heinrich is simply unable to convert his inner feelings into practical, outward expression [...]. Deadness is the price Heinrich pays for that continuous divorcing of his imaginative life from social reality.'[94] Following this event, Heinrich later discovers that Dortchen shared the same feelings for him, but that she had now become engaged to someone else: the inexorable and unforgiving nature of time is clearly shown here.

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[93] Jacobs (1972), p. 183
[94] Swales (1978), p. 89. And as Swales notes, Heinrich, not coincidentally, is called the 'frozen Christ'.

The consequences of every event that ever takes place in Heinrich's life are permanent, and the narrator's insistence on the irrevocable nature of some of Heinrich's actions reveals the strong 'realistic tic' of *Der grüne Heinrich*. Still, the narrator's — the older Heinrich's — ultimate assertion is that there is a sense of agreement in the universe if only one ultimately acts in the right way and according to certain principles, and, as protagonist, the younger Heinrich likewise recognises the presence of something more than chance in life, a vision of the world that still owes much to the ideas of the *Aufklärung*, in the sense that a definitive order that can be bestowed upon the universe does exist: '"Nicht blindem Zufall dient die Welt!'" (DGH, 746) is the conclusion Heinrich settles on, in what truly symbolises one of the legacies of the *Bildungsroman* genre.

It is true that Heinrich's flights of imagination are time and again shattered by the harsh, unforgiving reality of the world, so the finality of experience, of reality, is to correct Heinrich's exaggerated imaginative tendencies, as much as it is the case with Wilhelm Meister, but with a brutality that remains foreign to Goethe's novel. In this sense, the harmony that is more or less consistently present in Wilhelm's way hardly finds its equivalent in Heinrich's successive predicaments in life.

Despite the ultimate belief of the older narrating Heinrich in the individual's ability to achieve in his *Bildungsprozeß* an agreement between self and world, the type of realism of *Der grüne Heinrich* presents a description of

reality that is not harmonious at all, that is almost cruel, for that matter. This makes the tranquil attainment of the *Bildungsideal* in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and especially in *Der Nachsommer* a virtual impossibility.[95] Heinrich Lee must attempt to attain whatever he can attain in the thick of things, and this makes his *Selbstbildung* all the more problematic. What becomes more important, due to merciless nature of the world, is the individual's need to truly and honestly — just as Wilhelm Meister does — decide how he should live, what he can do *in* and *for* the world. With an earnest look into her/his nature, the individual might just achieve that, however little that self-awareness might be. Heinrich achieves this much by choosing a life of duty, and here it is again hard not to perceive similarities that exist between Heinrich and Wilhelm.

The weight and importance of the actuality of the world, of reality and real events in *Der grüne Heinrich* can furthermore be deduced from the countless political and social references in the novel, for example, the novel's engagement with economic terminology and questions about the market value and the true value of work (DGH, 646f). Here it distinguishes itself from both Goethe's and Stifter's novels. *Der grüne Heinrich* is a novel truly set in time and space, in that the influence of exterior events is of immense relevance to the development of

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[95] The political situation of the time when *Der grüne Heinrich* takes place, with its struggles of the bourgeoisie, might explain Keller's troubled depiction of the world. Keller, like the narrator of the novel, never loses the belief in humanity, but as Fritz Martini notes, his life and times seem to have made him more conservative and sceptical of the influence of the poetic imagination in the face of the real. Hence Heinrich's progression — and it ought to be seen as a progression — from artist to public servant. See Richard R. Ruppel, *Gottfried Keller and his Critics: A Case Study of Scholarly Criticism* (Columbia: Camden House, 1998), p. 100.

Heinrich. The society in which the protagonist dwells is not an isolated group as in the other two *Bildungsromane*. Heinrich's acquaintances live and work among active communities, often urban, which are all carefully and exhaustively depicted by the narrator. In *Der grüne Heinrich* there is an attempt, as it were, to unite two different traditions in fiction: 'Dieser Roman [vereinigt] die innere — d.h. sowohl psychologische als auch gedankliche — Intensität der Bildungsromantradition [...] mit der gesellschaftlichen Faktizität, mit der wirtschaftlichen und kognitiven Nüchternheit des europäischen Realismus.'[96]

As in other *Bildungsromane*, the narrator does describe the unfolding of Heinrich's self, but this unfolding cannot be dissociated from social factors: Heinrich truly grows 'im Tiefe des Volkes'. And, by the time the novel ends, Heinrich's path from individualism — connected to artistic subjectivity — to collectivism — connected to practical-political activity — is complete. The whole principle behind Heinrich's *Bildung* can be described as the striving for balance, as Rudolf Wildbolz notes, not only within himself but with the outside reality: '[Der Mensch muß] sich selbst in der Vielfalt seiner Antriebe, von denen jeder, wo er überwuchert, das Gefüge des Daseins zerbrechen kann, bändigen. Aber nicht nur sich selbst muss er ins Gleichgewicht bringen, sondern zugleich auch sich selbst mit der Welt.'[97] Balance within the individual, then, must be

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[96] Martin Swales, 'Das realistische Reflexionsniveau: Bemerkungen zu Gottfried Kellers "Der grüne Heinrich"' , in Wysling (1990), p. 9

[97] Wildbolz, quoted in Alice von Arx, *Krisenhaftes Erleben als Entwicklungsfaktor: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Gottfried Kellers Roman "Der grüne Heinrich"* (Bern: Arnaud, 1968), p. 93.

achieved, but where it is especially important is in the relation between subjectivity and objectivity, reflection and action, self and world. Only if this balance is achieved can the individual expect to find his place in the order of things, as only reality can validate man's inner tendencies: *Der grüne Heinrich* serves as a timely reminder of that particular *Bildungsroman* feature. In the realistic framework of *Der grüne Heinrich*, the untroubled unfolding of the protagonist's inner nature can no longer be achieved.

When the novel ends, Heinrich achieves equilibrium in life and realises that he had for too long lived at one extreme; in this sense that important search for the golden mean of the *Bildungsroman* applies to his *Bildung*. It is also no coincidence that it is the pragmatic Judith who helps him to see that and not the ethereal Anna. What Heinrich ultimately finds in his relationship with Judith is balance. With her physicality, with her pragmatic moral strongly attached to an altruistic social outlook, Judith fully helps Heinrich to rationally assess his — and their — current situation; she is a good thing that Heinrich cannot turn down a second time, and he does not: 'Aber jedesmal, wo wir uns sahen, ob täglich oder nur jährlich, war es uns ein Fest. Und wenn ich in Zweifel und Zwiespalt geriet, brauchte ich nur ihre Stimme zu hören, um die Stimme der Natur selbst zu vernehmen.' (DGH, 862) In the end, it is Judith, the voice of nature, and not the count — who always feels like a strange, Wilhelm-Meister-derivative body in the framework of the novel, anyway —, who sets Heinrich free, as it were, and who gains a mentor-like status in *Der grüne Heinrich*: she truly becomes to Heinrich

Lee what the society of the tower had been to Wilhelm Meister or Risach to Heinrich Drendorf.

By toning down his subjective and fanciful impulses, so to speak, Heinrich is also undergoing a potent ethical change: 'In difficult times of social and economical upheaval, [Keller suggests that] one must rely on oneself to determine right from wrong, by refining one's personal moral code subject to the natural law.'[98] Ethical conduct, after all, is related to the ways in which the individual deals or *does not* deal with others, in society. Because Heinrich sees, with the vital help of Judith, that the consequences of his actions always endure, he realises that this is an ethical choice he must embrace. As Swales, who cites Römer's ruin as an example of the error of Heinrich's ways, says: 'Judith confronts Heinrich with the fact that his life is not just an experiment which allows him to find himself in his own good time.'[99]

If there is an element of resignation on Heinrich's part in the end of the novel, in that he has to submit his imaginative excesses to a social role, the importance of the inner self is none the less confirmed, as everything must begin with introspection, whatever the weight of exterior factors: 'Wer die Welt will verbessern helfen, kehre erst vor seiner Türe.' (DGH, 844) Despite the added relevance it gives to external events, *Der grüne Heinrich* draws to a close

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[98] Ruppel (1998), p. 177
[99] Swales (1978), p. 97

stressing the importance of correctly evaluating one's inner endowments, of realising with an honest inner look what one is best suited to. It is impossible to have a fruitful relationship with the world if there is no right assessment of the individual's inner nature, no clarification of consciousness.

In the end, there is a way to social ethics, it begins inside and then translates itself into the service of others, politically and socially. Social concern and social fulfilment are thus the most important ends in the life of the individual: 'Damit erweist sich für den Protagonisten trotz krisenhafter Gefährdungen, trotz resignativer Ergebung in den "Lauf der Welt" die auf Goethes Spuren erworbene Einsicht in "den Zusammenhang und die Tiefe der Welt" letzlich als richtig.'[100] Heinrich's resignation, then, and if only thanks to Judith's reappearance, involves no element of bitterness, it is just the assumption of the best possible accommodation between self and world, between the organic unfolding of personality and public alertness, following the tradition of former *Bildungsromane*.

Ultimately, this is the stance the narrator takes, and the role of the narrator must always be taken into account in any discussion about the *Bildungsroman* as genre. In the case of *Der grüne Heinrich*, however deceptive Heinrich's path and resignation are, the reader should not be misled by them: after all, as Martini

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[100] Mayer (1992), p. 160. Roy Pascal and Jacobs also find a link with Wilhelm Meister in Heinrich's acceptance of social responsibility. See, respectively, Ruppel (1998), p. 127 and Jacobs (1972), p. 187.

says, resignation is in fact one of the most significant foundations — together with moderation, reflection and the individual's right of self-determination — on which Keller's thought is based.[101] The narrative is finally led in the same direction as previous *Bildungsromane*, because the narrator never loses perspective towards the demeanour of the younger Heinrich and fully understands the relation between self and world:

> The recollecting self celebrates precisely that modest human wholeness that is the interaction of world and self, of facts and imaginative allegiance. The novel intimates, in other words, that the prose of narrow circumstances can interlock with the poetry of the individual imagination, that human reality is an existential category in which the limited world of practical affairs can come alive with inward validation.[102]

As the world depicted in *Der grüne Heinrich* lacks harmony, the role of the narrator in establishing the design and the value of Heinrich's *Bildung* is all the more important, as the narrator is the ultimate keeper of the meaning of the *Bildungsprozeß*, and the increasingly important role of the narrator in the framework of the *Bildungsroman* is just beginning with *Der grüne Heinrich.*

Accommodation between self and world can happen if the self accepts the natural law, so there is a certain degree of optimism in this novel in terms of the individual's role in society. In the end, in addition, Judith tells Heinrich that he is still young, he is still green (DGH, 861), with a lot to learn, and this is something that is particularly significant, for it retrieves notions regarding the open

[101] See Martini, in Ruppel (1998), p. 99.
[102] Swales (1978), p. 103

character of the *Bildungsroman*, about the possibly long-lasting character of the *Bildungsprozeß*. In point of fact, from all the German novels considered in this thesis, *Der Nachsommer* is the only one in which the protagonist achieves all his goals by the time the novel ends.

Yet the chaotic contours of the world described in *Der grüne Heinrich* help to prepare the way, as it were, for the thunderbolt of the early twentieth century. The relation between self and world in the *Bildungsroman* was becoming increasingly complicated by the late nineteenth century, and the world would soon enough become a place where no compromises, no equilibrium, could be reached.

III

Three examples of the narrative of initiation

1. Terrible freedom: Huck Finn's negative progression

> As novels are about the ways in which human beings behave, they tend to imply a judgement of behavior, which means that the novel is what the symphony or painting or sculpture is not — namely, a form steeped in morality.
>
> Anthony Burgess

Despite the controversies that surround it, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is still frequently seen as the great American novel, and not only by critics, as one can gather from Hemingway's observation in *The Green Hills of Africa* (1934):

> 'All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*. If you read it you must stop where the Nigger Jim is stolen from the boys. That is the real end. The rest is just cheating. But it's the best book we've had. All American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since.'[1]

Both the novel's style and its motifs are often seen as constituting the beginning of a truly American literary tradition, one in which the European principles of fiction-writing no longer apply, which may or may not be true.[2] But since *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is normally considered the fountainhead of American colloquial prose, with its use of several vernacular

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[1] Ernest Hemingway, *The Green Hills of Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 22

[2] Spengemann thinks not, at least in the case of English literature. See Spengemann (1985).

dialects, it is not surprising to discover in it an inspiration for Hemingway's writing: 'Hemingway's own prose stems from it [*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*] directly and consciously.'[3]

As mentioned before, Mark Twain's novel has been inaccurately called a *Bildungsroman*. True, it might be something of a *Zeitroman*, as it does refer to important issues of its time, like slavery, but unlike the *Bildungsroman*, it does so without any reflective depth, without any kind of speculation. Furthermore, Huckleberry Finn, Huck Finn, the protagonist of the novel, is a twelve- or fourteen-year-old boy, in other words, a young adolescent.[4] Consequently, it would even be more appropriate to consider *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* a boy-book, as Marcia Jacobson does, as 'the boy book usually ended when its protagonist reached the age of twelve or fourteen'.[5]

In its structure, too, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* departs from the *Bildungsroman* tradition, as the episodic adventures it contains and the demeanour of its young protagonist throughout tend to recall another tradition of the novel, namely the picaresque, as Lionel Trilling, among others, has noted.[6] This, as might be expected, has only resulted in further confusion of genres:

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[3] Lionel Trilling, 'The Greatness of *Huckleberry Finn*', in Marks (1959), p. 51. Trilling further notes that the same consideration can be made regarding another writer who also helped to shape Hemingway's style: Sherwood Anderson, who will be discussed below.
[4] See Jonathan Raban, *Mark Twain: Huckleberry Finn* (London: Edward Arnold, 1968), p. 9f.
[5] Marcia Jacobson, *Being a Boy Again: Autobiography and the American Boy Book* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1994), p. 11
[6] See, as an example, Trilling, in Marks (1959), p. 50.

'Because the picaresque novel is superbly suitable for bildungsroman (sic), individual episodes serve to express the theme of adolescent initiation and growth.'[7]

Plain Huck might be seen as a picaro, as he lacks the depth of insight, the inner life and any concern with self-awareness, as well as the culture-related concern with self-cultivation that the *Bildungsheld* possesses. He is picaresquely knocked about by experience, even damaged by it, yet he often remains quite incapable of forming a thought, let alone consider his self-cultivation. It is better, then, to focus on this novel from one of the multifaceted perspectives mentioned above by Stewart Rodnon, for example the initiation theme, to see what does or does not make it a narrative of initiation, as critics like Hassan see it. The question is which of the two terms he has coined — 'initiation' or 'victimisation' — is more appropriate to describe *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (see chapter I, note 68).

If one cannot, because of Huck's years, speak of a painful transition to manhood on his part, it must be recalled that at the heart of the novel of initiation also lies the encounter, the conflict, between the individual and the world, the world's otherness, and this is especially relevant in Huck's case. When Huck decides to escape from his father's house by faking his own death, he is also

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[7] Stewart Rodnon, '*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Invisible Man*: Thematic and Structural Comparisons', in *Negro American Literature Forum*, 4 (1970), 45

turning his back on everything he knows. As Fiedler remarks, his 'is a pretended, a quasi-ritual death to the community and its moral codes; [...] a last desperate evasion, an act of self-defense'.[8]

Huck's is an escape from everything associated with the village life he leads, and not only from the brutality of his father. The essence of Huck's rebellion lies in his desire to break free of the stifling presence of Miss Watson and of her attempts to "sivilize" him, to make him follow strict rules. Huck is consequently positioned in defiance of his society's whole system of values, as Jonathan Raban argues: 'The presence of such an anarchic figure as this untidy child of the underworld represents a threat to the village's perilously-held stability. Not surprisingly, local society does its best to "civilise" Huck, indoctrinating him with respectable village values.'[9]

The longing for freedom sets the early tone of Huck's fictional experience. When the runaway slave Jim joins Huck in his escape, the theme of freedom becomes even more significant: Huck is running away from Pap Finn's cruelty and Miss Watson's restrictions, Jim is running away from a life of slavery. Many freedoms are dealt with in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and Huck and Jim paradoxically find the freedom of seclusion in the company of each other. Raban thinks their plight is similar, because they 'are victims both; they have

[8] Fiedler (1960), p. 568f
[9] Raban (1968), p. 16f. Raban further notes that Huck's derelict life on the river is in direct contrast to the moral stability of the village.

been bought by a society whose corruption they cannot fully perceive'.[10] The escape of the two misfits in their raft has been seen in American studies ever since as 'an unforgettable moment in American experience'.[11] How one interprets their escape is of capital importance for the critical study of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, as 'without the motive of escape from society, *Huckleberry Finn* would indeed be only a sequence of adventures'.[12] And the novel is frequently seen as having much more substance than that.

Because of Jim's particular situation, the beginnings of the narrative action are, to say the least, implausible. The runaway slave and his young companion escape, in fact, down the Mississippi, as they travel south, to the very heartland of the slave states, in their quest for freedom, something which has puzzled critics for a long time, as Van O'Connor states: 'The downstream movement of the story (theme as well as action) runs counter to Jim's effort to escape. Life on the raft might indeed be read as implied criticism of civilization — but it doesn't get Jim any closer to freedom.'[13] None the less, it is in this voyage down the river that Huck learns to treasure his and Jim's independence, as he is confronted time and again with the ugliness of the society that he sees in the towns in the riverbanks. This is his initiation into the evils of the world and the negative aspects of society, his ultimate loss of innocence. In *The Adventures*

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[10] Ibid., p. 56
[11] Leo Marx, 'Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling, and *Huckleberry Finn*', in Marks (1959), p. 55
[12] Ibid., p. 58
[13] Van O'Connor, ibid., p. 102

of Huckleberry Finn, evil is seen as being ultimately a product of organised society. Huck sees violence, death and greed during his journey, even though his raft is adrift from society at large.

The raft only stays immune to society's corrupt ways, of course, until Huck and Jim are joined by the duke and the king in their voyage. The raft then ceases to be a sanctuary from the social world, which is seen as unavoidable in the long run: 'The water of the river had flowed between Huck and other people; Nature provided a mysterious boundary between society and the protected self. [...] Huck has chosen his passengers badly, for although the king and the duke are refugees from society, they are also its prototypical products.'[14] Huck's escape from society, then, is only remarkable for its brevity.

There is no doubting the seriousness of Jim's motives for escape, yet it is quite possible (and plausible) to see Huck's quest for freedom in a more uncomplicated way, as being no more than mere freedom from social constraints and from society's petty and empty mannerisms, and many critics do: 'It is not freedom to do anything; it is not even freedom *from* anything important. It is freedom from table-manners and formal clothes, and evening prayers.'[15] Huck's status as a *bon sauvage*, then, helps to shed some light on the true importance of his reasons for escape. It is possible that his dislike for the more conventional

[14] Raban (1968), p. 42
[15] Martin Green, *Re-Appraisals: Some Commonsense Readings in American Literature* (London: Hugh Evelyn, 1963), p. 136

ways of society is nothing but a longing for a less responsible and more carefree life, and not at all the strong ethical protest it has come to be identified with. His rejection of the social world might just be linked to the fascination that nature holds for the protagonists of American fiction.

Huck's escape route, the river, is the most obvious symbol for nature in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and it represents a safe haven against the civilisation of the towns on its shores: 'After every sally into the social life of the shore, he [Huck] returns to the river with relief and thanksgiving. [...] Its nature [the river's] seems to foster the goodness of those who love it and try to fit themselves to its ways.'[16] Nature might be indifferent to man, but it is not inherently evil, like society and "sivilized" people.

The presence of nature is always dominant during Huck's quiet moments, for instance when he goes to live with widow Douglas: 'Living in a house and sleeping in a bed pulled on me pretty tight mostly, but before the cold weather I used to slide out and sleep in the woods sometimes, and so that was a rest to me. I liked the old ways best.' (HF, 21) Furthermore, the first stop of his escape from "sivilization" is into the heart of nature, his holy resting place; he escapes to the island, 'on which the refugee lives', as Fiedler says, 'for a little while, [...] in the bosom of nature, fishing, swimming, smoking the pipe forbidden by mothers'.[17]

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[16] Trilling, in Marks (1959), p. 46
[17] Fiedler (1960), p. 569

Nature is where Huck can be himself, and where his cunning and his natural and clever pragmatism can best help him. Huck's practical side is intimately related to his contact with nature, which can especially be confirmed when seen in contrast to his friend Tom Sawyer's overdone bookish imagination. Yet initiation must take place in confrontation with otherness, and in the case of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, it is in society, under many guises, that this otherness makes itself seen. Huck's faked death, then, 'with all its visionary sublimity, can only be a transient one; Huck has to return to some kind of social existence'.[18] This social existence is the yardstick of Huck's initiation, and only against it can any growth on his part — moral or other — be measured.

The defining moment of Huck's relation with the values of American society occurs when he has to decide what to do with Jim, his travel companion, the runaway slave. Huck has to decide if he should hand him over to the slave hunters or not. He chooses not to, seemingly going against his corrupt social conscience. 'All right then, I'll *go* to hell' is what he accepts as the consequence of his actions. (HF, 297) What exactly is behind his decision has been one of the great points of disagreement in all critical discussion of the novel. And what is at stake in this discussion is the very status of Huck's initiation.

[18] Raban (1968), p. 29

The importance of Huck's decision is intimately connected with the fictional portrait of Jim and his role in the novel, as Jim's depiction has prompted strong accusations of racism.[19] As slavery is a theme of overwhelming ethical importance, these claims are buoyed not only by the fictional depiction of Jim, but especially by Huck's treatment of him. This question is of such importance because the whole critical defence of Huck's initiation usually lies in the evidence of his moral growth, which is what does not allow him to hand over the runaway slave. Huck's process of self-awareness relies on his discovery, in his heart, that slavery and racism are evil, thus making his behaviour profoundly moral, especially as the action *of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* takes place at a time when slavery still existed as a legal institution in America. Yet this view can, to some extent, be put into perspective, and maybe it should. This has been the case, especially in recent years, and the whole status of the novel has begun being put under deep scrutiny: 'True, we are sometimes told that the novel [*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*] is an "attack on racism" without ever being told, precisely, why we should believe it.'[20]

Critics who defend the book usually accuse its detractors of failing to see Twain's irony in realistically depicting a world where slavery exists in order to criticise it, by means of satire, with the bond between Huck and Jim. In their turn,

[19] This kind of accusation is often made when it comes to Twain's novels. His portrayal of Native Americans is also less than sympathetic throughout his work, as they are always depicted as little more than treacherous savages. The character Injun Joe in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) is perhaps the best-known example.

[20] Tom Quirk, 'Is *Huckleberry Finn* Politically Correct?', in *American Realism and the Canon*, eds Tom Quirk and Gary Scharnhorst (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994), p. 190

critics who condemn the novel as racist say that its defenders see the realism of Jim's depiction quite naïvely, and that he is a mere Uncle Tom figure.[21] The main question, however, does not lie in the realistic depiction of Jim. It is true that Jim is portrayed as a slave in a slave state, and his role can never fully be seen without paying attention to that fact. The term 'nigger', used hundreds of times during the novel when referring to him, however uncomfortable to read, is used as a synonym for slave, and is indeed part of the realistic mode of the novel. Although it is an offensive term, one can none the less assume that it is used for purposes of verisimilitude. The crux of the problem lies elsewhere.

The real problem does not lie in knowing if the alibi of *Zeitgeist* and realism are enough to justify the portrayal of Jim (as the novel, in fact, was written after the Civil War). What is more important here is the fact that Huck, despite his resolution, never sees Jim as an equal, or even as human, sometimes, because Jim is black. When Huck talks to Aunt Sally after assuming Tom Sawyer's identity and trying to explain his journey, he suddenly becomes the fully-fledged product of his culture:

> 'It warn't the grounding — that didn't keep us back but a little. We blowed out a cylinder-head.'
> 'Good gracious! anybody hurt?'
> 'No'm. Killed a nigger.'
> 'Well it's lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt.' (HF, 306f)

[21] The term, "borrowed" from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), evokes ideas of romantic racism, as the slave is viewed as some kind of noble savage, undaunted by adversity and ennobled by his suffering, and who therefore deserves the respect of the white man.

The defenders of Huck's morality and of the non-racist stance usually see this exchange as Huck just being ironic, just playing with Aunt Sally's own prejudiced convictions: it is hard to know how he should know of these convictions, as this dialogue happened when he had just met her. The irony seems lost, too, and its absence is confirmed by the ending of the novel. Jim and Huck's relationship is seen as going deeper than what Huck says, based as it was on mutual respect. The question lies in knowing if it really is based on mutual respect. It might be, as Fiedler argues, that the suffering but forever forgiving Jim is 'the Southerner's dream, the American dream of guilt remitted by the abused Negro'.[22]

Quirk considers that Huck's decision to help Jim is trivial, as trivial 'as an itch that has to be scratched or a sneeze that has to be sneezed. As for deciding to go to hell, we know from the very first page of the novel that he wasn't much interested in playing the harp anyway'.[23] It must be none the less noted that Huck does care for Jim, he is not selfish and unmindful of the plight of his travel companion. This can be seen in his dialogue with Mary Jane, when he explains that there are things about his journey with the duke and the king (and Jim) that he cannot tell her: 'I druther not tell you why; and if you was to blow on them this town would get me out of their claws and I'd be all right; but there'd be

[22] Fiedler (1960), p. 585

[23] Quirk (1994), p. 196. When Miss Watson tries to convince him to be good in order to go to heaven, Huck thinks: 'Now she had got a start, and she went on and told me all about the good place. She said all a body would have to do there was to go around all day long with a harp and sing forever and ever. So I didn't think much of it.' (HF, 3f)

another person that you don't know about who'd be in big trouble. Well, we got to save *him*, hain't we?'[24]

What should be doubted is the seriousness and the reach of the concept of morality behind Huck's decision. After all, Huck thinks that he is going to hell by saving Jim because he is breaking actual laws, not the least of them being Miss Watson's right of property over Jim. As Fiedler says, it 'never enters his [Huck's] head for a moment that protecting Jim against recapture is anything but *wrong*; for he has no abolitionist ideas and questions the justice of slavery no more than did Aristotle'.[25] Huck decides to go to hell, but he had decided before that he was not going to heaven anyway, because he wanted to smoke. So it can be said that there is no actual moral growth on his part.

It is frequently argued that Jim is, in fact, the very conscience of the novel, and that Huck's moral stature grows out of Jim's example: 'Huck's whole sense of wrong, his feelings of guilt are products of his intimate association with Jim — his companionship with the runaway slave makes possible his moral growth.'[26] Yet Huck's heart, normally seen as natural and pure, in opposition to his socially acquired and consequently corrupt conscience, is already contaminated by society and ultimately fails him. Even if Huck had indeed experienced any kind of moral development, that development is curtailed and

[24] Ibid., p. 261
[25] Fiedler (1960), p. 576
[26] James M. Cox, 'Remarks on the Sad Initiation of Huckleberry Finn', in Marks (1959), p. 73

made irrelevant by Tom Sawyer's entrance into the novel. It is with Huck as an accomplice that Tom decides to romanticise Jim's escape from his confinement, even though Tom already knows that Jim has become a free man. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* becomes Tom Sawyer's book in the end, and makes for very uneasy reading, as 'the passages that portray the runaway slave Jim as childlike and that depict his constant humiliation at the hands of the two boys he calls friends are impossible to read without cringing'.[27]

Huck is said to be a better person than the members of society that surround him, yet the ending of the novel seems to invalidate this assumption. Despite the fact that the defenders of this ending see in it a satire on the re-enslavement of freed blacks in southern states after the Reconstruction, the ending remains, as Van O'Connor notes, 'a serious anti-climax' when one looks at the novel as a whole.[28] Whatever freedom Huck had won is surrendered to Tom, as Huck does not speak for himself again until the very end of the novel. Tom denies Jim his freedom and robs Huck of his. Huck ends up aiding Tom to have 'the best fun he ever had in his life, and the most intellectural' at Jim's expense (HF, 345). And Huck's ethical and moral insights, which undoubtedly existed at one stage and were heightened by the shocking spectacle of society's ways, go astray. Arguments imputing satire and irony have a hard time accounting for this.

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[27] David Kirby, 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn', in Schellinger (1998), p. 9
[28] Van O'Connor, in Marks (1959), p. 101

At the Wilkses, when he saw the duke and the king take advantage of the girls' plight, Huck states that 'it was enough to make a body ashamed of the human race'.[29] Yet he lets Tom, and *joins* Tom, in taking advantage of Jim's predicament in the end. If his escape had heightened his moral sense, he now becomes passive again, accommodated under Tom's tutelage, a picaro who does not learn and whose experience counts for nothing. Huck, who during the course of the novel is mean to no one else, had, for a laugh, played tricks on Jim throughout. He first does it in Tom's company when Jim is sleeping, later almost kills Jim, and in the end joins Tom again in inflicting unnecessary pranks and torments on the runaway slave. He does not do this to a slave, but to a man, yet Huck is quite incapable throughout of understanding this, almost as if Jim were something less than human.

Or it might be that Huck is just as amoral as he ever was. He sees Jim as Miss Watson's property, as is made clear when the king and the duke hand Jim over, thus even if 'he subverts the system in practice by aiding Jim's escape, he never makes a conscious moral rejection of it'.[30] It might be because of this that the boy-protagonist of much American fiction is sometimes considered to be a brute. In truth, Huck is completely incapable of abstracting from his own experience any comprehensive maxim that leads to ethical and moral behaviour

[29] Ibid., p. 224. Furthermore, this is a sentence that 'has a wide currency among critics who have used it to detect a profound change in Huck's moral attitude'. See Raban (1968), p. 48.
[30] Ibid., p. 22

on his part, morality understood as being the ability to consider interests other than his own; Huck only acts as circumstances allow: 'But he is sublimely free of any rational code of behaviour, and as we discover throughout the novel, the absence of a properly comprehended code threatens him constantly with unwitting immorality.'[31] Perhaps all he wanted from Jim was a little company, as, after all, Huck frequently feels lonesome.[32]

Huck has a sound heart, and a conscience, certainly, but the latter is deformed beyond repair by society; his is a conscience 'that cannot decide what actions are morally right and what actions are morally wrong'.[33] Being natural, after all, is not good in itself. As Cox notes, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* narrate 'Huck's initiation into respectable society. The tragic irony of the novel is Huck's inner awareness that membership in the cult will involve the dissolution of his character and the denial of his values'.[34] Cox goes on to say that a part of Huck's initiation consists in his adoption of different roles throughout — he is thought to be dead, after all —, and culminates as he assumes Tom's identity at the Phelps' farm.

Huck becomes Tom, and he becomes the very society he had escaped from. As Cox points out, the respectable society from which Tom Sawyer comes

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[31] Ibid., p. 27
[32] Sentences when Huck says things like 'I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead' (HF, 4) are frequent throughout the novel.
[33] Gregg Camfield, *Sentimental Twain: Mark Twain in the Maze of Moral Philosophy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), p. 149
[34] Cox, in Marks (1959), p. 68

demands obedience — and imitation.[35] In the end, Huck *is* Tom, and it becomes clear that the novel is not a downstream movement, it is rather a cyclical one, as Huck again becomes imprisoned in and by society: 'He finishes up, as he started, immersed in the cosy silliness of the village.'[36]

There have been some great changes in Huck. This is one of them, yet the careful reader at least half expects Huck to treat Jim as he ultimately does (although the nature of that treatment is brutally surprising). After all, Huck's association with what society had to offer had always been ambiguous. In fact, he had got used to being "sivilized", as he had adapted to school, and not only to school: 'At first I hated the school, but by and by I got so I could stand it. […] So the longer I went to school the easier it got to be. I was getting sort of used to the widow's ways, too.' (HF, 21) One must bear in mind that he only left his 'new ways' because Pap Finn abducted him.

Huck always adapts to circumstances, whatever they might be, in the self-sufficient tradition of the protagonists of American fiction. Having been abducted by his father, he soon gets used to it, which is a further sign of his ability to adjust: 'The drunken chaos of Pap Finn's hut, with its complete exclusion of ethical abstracts, provides Huck with an acceptable alternative to the stifling mores of the village. […] A world familiar to Huck, accessible to his own

[35] Ibid., p. 72
[36] Raban (1968), p. 49

language and uncomplicated by foreign concepts.'[37] Huck decides to leave because of his father's violent delirium tremens, but also, and in no small part, because Pap Finn locks him in there and he feels lonely. Huck is nothing if not adaptable, even conformist: 'Huck may be subversive, corrupted, a little stupid; but he is not an innocent. [...] The moment we begin listening attentively to the way Huck talks we hear the voice, not of gilded youth, but of a bitter and premature resignation.'[38]

He left then, and in the end he again decides to flee: 'But I reckon I got to light out for the territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before.' (HF, 405) His escape appears eternal, because he can never go far enough to truly escape society; Huck 'can never cease moving, never learn to belong', and it is doubtful that he can ever reproduce the society he had with Jim where he could be natural and was 'called upon to sacrifice nothing of himself'.[39] But social values got in between — he could not remove them. It seems that Huck believed he was running from Miss Watson and Pap Finn and not from himself; but he was wrong.

Huck comes to know evil, he sees in the world, and, incapable of ethical growth, ends up reproducing it. This is his tragedy: he can escape from society,

[37] Ibid., p. 26f
[38] Ibid., p. 18
[39] Fiedler (1960), p. 582

yet the system of values that is the very foundation of that society lives on *in* him and he cannot relinquish it. In the end, even if he does not return to "sivilization", he knows that he can go nowhere far enough away to extricate its evils. This is the true reason why *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is such a powerful criticism of society: society cannot be removed, because it becomes part of the body, not of garments; and society's victims must live on abiding by what society made them to be.

The ending of this narrative of initiation, according to Leo Marx, 'makes so many readers uneasy because they rightly sense that it jeopardizes the significance of the entire novel. To take seriously what happens at the Phelps' farm is to take lightly the entire downstream journey'.[40] To solve this problem, and in order to salvage the novel as a whole, the only choice left to Marx is to call the conclusion a farce.

A 'huckleberry' was nineteenth-century slang for a person of no importance. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has been anything but that in American fiction. It is a violent initiation into life in America before the Civil War. Huck cannot come to terms with that life, he cannot grow out of it, and he remains in the end what he had been from the very beginning. His adventures

[40] Marx, in Marks (1959), p. 54. Of all critics dealt with here, Marx is one of the most incensed with the novel's ending: 'And we are asked to believe that the boy who felt pity for the rogues is now capable of making Jim's capture the occasion for a game', he asks with indignation (p. 57). According to Marx, and he borrows from George Santayana on this, the problem is that Twain had only half escaped the genteel tradition, and this is what causes the diminishing of the significance of the novel, and with it Huck's victory over prevailing morality.

constitute a process of victimisation, unless, of course, one accepts Hemingway's suggestion in *The Green Hills of Africa*.

2. The attainment of manhood through the experience of war

> The world about us would be desolate
> except for the world within us.
> Wallace Stevens

The dominant theme of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* is war. It may seem redundant to state something like this, yet conflict dominates the entire novel, and in more than one sense. Henry Fleming, its protagonist, is involved in the realities of the American Civil War, but he is also fighting himself, his mind and his conscience ever since fleeing the front when faced with a combat situation. This defining moment also stands for the beginning of his initiation: 'It [*The Red Badge of Courage*] is also "a tale of initiation": a youthful hero, after having been overmastered by fear, regains self-confidence and acquires a juster view of his importance in the cosmos.'[41] The process he undergoes to get there is what is meaningful.

War, concrete war on the fields of battle, is the setting where young Henry can learn his true worth and achieve manhood: 'The sun spread disclosing rays, and one by one, regiments burst into view like armed men just born of the earth. The youth perceived that the time had come. He was about to be measured.'

[41] Daniel Aaron, *The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 215

(RBC, 26)[42] In Crane's fiction, war is essentially a testing ground where a man can measure up to himself — courage is, after all, an important theme of the narrative of initiation — and be examined, 'since it [war] provides the tumult which forces out direct expression. Man is the same under more tranquil conditions, but placidity affords him greater opportunity to mask his nature with irrelevant sentiments'.[43]

Still, that is exactly what Henry does, as even in the middle of strife, and according to his states of mind, he masquerades, embellishes and/or distorts whatever happens to him. The most significant battlefield appears to take place inside his own mind. This is what causes him, for instance, to hide the truth about his red badge. Yet the frequent absurdity of Henry's own mental processes also functions as a mirror for the absurdity of war.

In *The Red Badge of Courage*, the causes of the larger conflict are not known by the reader, and from the soldiers' point of view, their whole endeavour seems pointless: after several victories and setbacks, Henry's battalion closes the narrative at exactly the same point where they started, with no gain of ground whatsoever. Irony is a tool skilfully used by the narrator of *The Red Badge of Courage* to expose war's alleged glory.

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[42] Regarding the theme of youth, it can be said that it usually finds a privileged field in war literature, due to the age of the ones who usually fight in it. The Civil War was no different, as Aaron notes: 'Most of the recruits were boys and young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty (the Civil War was fought largely by boy-men).' Ibid., p. 213.

[43] Larzer Ziff, *The American 1890s: Life and Times of a Lost Generation* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), p. 197

War, then, is absurd, even to the point of obscenity, and the very antithesis of what Henry, who harboured literary and romantic ideas about it, had expected: 'He had read of marches, sieges, conflicts, and he had longed to see it all. His busy mind had drawn for him large pictures extravagant in color, lurid with breathless deeds.' (RBC, 4)[44] Yet what he finds is completely different: the scenes of battle are confused and chaotic, and nothing there conforms to standard descriptions of heroics and martial bravery.

There is nothing glorious about war — that 'blood-swollen god' —, it is simply a brutal affair, and the often mechanistic depiction of it in *The Red Badge of Courage* serves to emphasise not only its complexity, but also its destructiveness, as Henry witnesses: 'The battle was like the grinding of an immense and terrible machine to him. Its complexities and powers, its grim processes, fascinated him. He must go close and see it produce corpses.' (RBC, 63) This new notion of war started a trend in American fiction, even in American thought: 'The *Red Badge* is his [Crane's] challenge to the culture of those [American] communities. The folklore built on romantic memories of the Civil War was Shakespeare and the *Iliad* for the American village, giving its inhabitants a sense of identity and of shared achievement.'[45]

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[44] Later on in the narrative, Henry even romanticises his own death, speaking of 'the magnificent pathos of his dead body' (RBC, 82). Henry begins the novel by imagining himself fighting like a character out of some Homeric narrative, and the irony lies in the immense gulf that exists between his daydreams and what actually happens. In this, he might be a bit like Tom Sawyer, but he is no Achilles.

[45] Ziff (1973), p. 195

The legacy of *The Red Badge of Courage* can still be seen in Hemingway's fiction. Many of Hemingway's short stories (as well as novels) are themselves concerned with the annihilation of myths of heroism and the protagonist's reactions to the absence of those preconceived ideas. Hemingway's style, furthermore, with its conscious emphasis on non-poetic and non-romantic descriptions of war, also brings his fiction close to Crane's. Yet more than anything else, young Henry's fear and utter confusion contribute to the modern, disillusioned treatment of the war motif. Henry's human condition makes him unable to comprehend the brutality of warfare, in what makes him a forerunner of Nick Adams and other modern fictional protagonists of war.

Henry's shortcomings, as well as his qualities, are often more imagined than real. His conflicting relation to the theatre of war is adulterated by his own inner processes from early on, as Henry's behaviour only adds to his anguish, which heightens in him a sense of cowardice and shame:

> [This inner dialogue of Henry] is a constant search for excuses to justify his cowardly conduct. Occasional flashes of inner sincerity are defeated by his attempts to demonstrate that what he did was logically and morally valid, but his arguments would fail to convince anyone and only add to his torment.[46]

[46] Jean Cazemajou, 'Stephen Crane', in *Seven Novelists in the American Naturalist Tradition: An Introduction*, ed. Charles Child Walcutt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974), p. 34. Despite the already discussed peculiarities of the narrative of initiation, the preponderance of Henry's inner operations could certainly be seen as a link to the *Bildungsroman* genre.

Much of what is significant in *The Red Badge of Courage* takes place inside Henry's mind, which continuously distorts the reality around him, almost as if Henry is in a struggle to preserve his own sanity, to make some kind of possible sense of the chaos that surrounds him.

The influence of the processes of Henry's mind can most clearly be seen in the views of nature that are presented throughout the novel. Nature becomes in turn hopeful and cruel, depending on the state of Henry's feelings. In *The Red Badge of Courage*, unlike what happens in the other narratives of initiation analysed in this thesis, nature is not seen exclusively as a safe haven, because there is no such place in the midst of war. Having said this, it must none the less be noted that Henry appears at least to find a degree of reassurance in nature, as its tranquillity is time and again contrasted to the noise and turmoil of war: 'As he gazed around him the youth felt a flash of astonishment at the blue, pure sky and the sun gleaming on the trees and fields. It was surprising that Nature had gone tranquilly with her golden process in the midst of so much devilment.' (RBC, 47)

In between battles, Henry manages to find peace in nature. In one of these moments, Henry experiences such a state, some kind of religion of peace in a natural temple in a forest where he is hiding. Yet he soon discovers that this house of worship is profaned by a decomposing corpse. War's obscenity is unyielding, no matter how much the mind attempts to keep it at bay or to give

something meaning when there is none to be given, as there is nothing like the impact of reality to shatter any mental construct.[47] It is confrontation — often violent in nature — with reality, after all, that is the sum and substance of the narrative of initiation.

As Charles Child Walcutt puts it, war, the obscene war described in *The Red Badge of Courage*, and any war, for that matter, is 'humanity's outrage upon itself'.[48] Yet it is whilst he is involved in it that Henry's initiation occurs, it is in its amoral and brutal confines that he must, if he possibly can, grow. There is no morality in a world at war, so Henry's inner operations, despite their relentless nature, are important for this growth, because they attempt to receive — and revive, almost — what little they can out of the data of experience, because, as Marston LaFrance argues, 'morality must be a creation of man's weak mental machinery alone'.[49] And it is perhaps due to this fact that this "machinery" is continuously represented as being so prone to error.

The great critical discussions concerning *The Red Badge of Courage*'s status as a narrative of initiation concentrate on the extent to which its protagonist matures or not when faced with the evil, the otherness, of war. This happens because *The Red Badge of Courage* is often seen as a naturalistic novel,

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[47] Marston LaFrance compares Henry's sojourn in the forest to a pilgrimage into his own mind, into his own heart of darkness. See LaFrance, *A Reading of Stephen Crane* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 110f.
[48] Walcutt, 'Introduction' (1974), p. 14
[49] LaFrance (1971), p. 98. LaFrance points out that this is a recurrent theme in Crane's work.

dealing with forces external to the protagonist, in an outright description of the struggles of the passage to maturity in a particularly hostile world. Walcutt is one of the critics who examine this debate: 'The defenders of the naturalistic extreme insisted more and more strongly that Henry was reacting like an animal.'[50] The episode with the squirrel, illustrating another one of Henry's digressions, is frequently used to defend this assumption.

In this sequence, Henry throws a pine cone at a squirrel, and the squirrel instinctively runs away, something which leads Henry to a simple conclusion: 'There was the law, he said. Nature had given him a sign. The squirrel, immediately upon recognizing danger, had taken to its legs without ado. [...] The youth wended, feeling that Nature was of his mind. She re-enforced his argument with proofs that live where the sun shone.' (RBC, 58f) Trying again to mentally manipulate the meaning of events, Henry feels justified, vindicated in his escape.

Behind the naturalistic view of the novel is the belief that Henry undergoes no change of character and no moral development. It is always hard to find morality in war, due to its innate immorality, and *The Red Badge of Courage* can indeed be read almost as an anti-war manifesto. The very nature of naturalistic prose, furthermore, is such that the naturalistic novelist is seen as not attempting to make any kind of moral statement. This only adds to the particular difficulty of reading *The Red Badge of Courage*.

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[50] Walcutt (1974), p. 13

There are other critical views holding that *The Red Badge of Courage* can and should be read symbolically, as its recurrent symbols confer unity upon the novel; or arguing that the novel should be seen as an allegory.[51] The allegorical view of *The Red Badge of Courage* deserves closer examination, as it seems to be tenable, at least when the novel opens. The reader is introduced to a group of characters that, in exemplary fashion, are simply designated as figures in an allegory: 'the tall soldier', 'the loud soldier', the 'tattered soldier'. Even Henry is designated solely as 'the youth'. He only 'acquires' his true identity in chapter eleven. The overall stress on anonymity can also be related to the unimportance of the individual in a war situation, where only the whole seems to matter.

What is true is that due to the weight given to Henry's inner processes, the naturalistic claims to "scientific" objectivity sometimes seem precarious. And the story, although based on an accurate observation of surface reality, is, in terms of narrative technique, rendered in a quite impressionistic manner, rather than told directly. The view of determinism in *The Red Badge of Courage*, a view that tends towards a certain pessimism, seems contrary to Henry's growth. It is my belief that Henry does indeed change, his is a growth that proceeds out of an instinctive reaction, but one which is not merely animal, because Henry does abstract something out of his experience, something which an animal cannot do.

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[51] Cazemajou, for example, considers the novel to be pregnant with religious imagery and meaning. See Cazemajou, in Walcutt (1974).

There is no denying the fact that Henry's growth happens by means of reaction to external events — war, after all, is the ultimate testing ground where the individual can learn about himself —, but it would be wrong not to recognise that Henry is different at the end of the narrative from when he set out for war. A combination of the naturalistic standpoint and of views that agree with Henry's growth seems necessary.

Henry's initiation occurs, and the death of his friend Jim Conklin is an important episode in that initiation. Jim functions throughout as a reference in Henry's search for courageous manhood: 'Also, Conklin's death is as necessary to Henry's education as his parallel encounter with the corpse was. [...] Henry rebels against the universe at this grotesque and meaningless death of a man.'[52] Conklin's very position as 'the tall soldier' seems to correspond to his moral stature, which Henry many times wishes he could emulate.

But Henry, when faced with danger in the battlefield, had run for his life like a 'proverbial chicken' with its head cut off, then received his wound, his red badge without any merit whatsoever.[53] When he returns to the group of his comrades, his friend Jim senselessly killed, Henry's guilt is overwhelming. He had felt like a mental outcast among his comrades since the beginning, as he

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[52] LaFrance (1971), p. 113

[53] And Henry regrets his escape, or is ashamed of it: 'At times he regarded the wounded soldiers in an envious way. He conceived persons with torn bodies to be peculiarly happy. He wished that he, too, had a red badge of courage.' (RBC, 68)

thought no one was bothered with the same important, ethereal and elevated questions as he was; he had thus 'kept from intercourse with his companions as much as circumstances would allow him' (RBC, 20). After he escapes battle, and for all the feelings of remorse and shame they bring out in him, Henry again rejects his comrades: 'Henry's guilt first evokes rationalization of his cowardice as superior intelligence, and from this premise his mind moves through anger at his "stupid" comrades who had "betrayed", him [...] and finally to a general "animal-like rebellion against his fellows."'[54]

Yet by returning to his unit, Henry is also returning to the only society he has; he is in fact returning to 'security within the codes and conventions of society, of law, honor and authority'.[55] Henry redeems himself somewhat by putting aside his own sense of personal importance, and he engages himself in the common objectives of the group. These are the paramount elements of his initiation. The guilt that leads him back to the company of his comrades accords with the initiation pattern of withdrawal and return, and is based on his choice between the purely animal and the responsible, the social. Contrary to other

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[54] LaFrance (1971), p. 111. It can be said that society at large is not a feature of *The Red Badge of Courage*, as the novel mostly deals with microcosms, such as Henry's military unit. Yet this unit is still part of the army as a whole, however splintered that army may be. Certainly its elements are as distant from each other as people are in society. Lars Åhnebrink notes that in *The Red Badge of Courage* 'Crane did not change his focus of interest: the individual in his relationship to society and the group'. See Åhnebrink, *The Beginnings of Naturalism in American Fiction: A Study of the Works of Hamlin Garland, Stephen Crane, and Frank Norris with Special Reference to Some European Influences 1891-1903* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), p. 96.

[55] Maxwell Geismar, *Rebels and Ancestors: The American Novel* (London: W. H. Allen, 1954), p. 86. Geismar further considers Henry's return to his unit to be a kind of moral resurrection.

narratives of initiation, the return to society has a positive value, even if it can be seen as nothing more than a reaction caused by a survival instinct.

But Henry's return also underlines the significance of his mental processes. By going back, he acts in response to his own demands upon himself, as he moves from mental and feigned heroics to something resembling authentic bravery. Fighting like a daredevil at the end of the novel — insane behaviour seemingly admissible in the midst of the insanity of war —, his actions appear to arise from the blending of courageous (*re*-)action and mature belief in himself. Henry might still be to some extent a scared soldier — that is the weight of his humanity —, but, within the context and scheme of the novel, he truly appears to be a proud epitome of the virtue of courage. And, again, courage is the guarantor of manhood in the framework of *The Red Badge of Courage*.

At the beginning of the day of the battle which occurs at the end of the novel, Henry still suffers the contrition of his cowardice, despite having deceived his colleagues and made them believe otherwise.[56] His pose is ended by a sarcastic comment of one of his comrades, in what brings echoes of the awkward questions of the tattered soldier. Yet Henry's boasting and pretensions build up a

[56] In an interesting essay analysing Henry's cowardice and/or courage, Frank Sadler points out that the base word of Henry's name is 'Fleme', an intransitive verb meaning 'to flee' or 'to run away'. In this sense, Henry is a coward. See Sadler, 'Crane's "Fleming": Appellation for Coward or Hero?', in *American Literature*, 48 (1976).

certain assurance in him, and up to a point where they actually allow him to dominate his fear.

With his mind in turmoil, Henry fights well during the day, at one point even grasping the national flag from the hands of a dying sergeant. When he hears a general disapprove of his and his comrades' accomplishments during the battle, the narrator advises that Henry had 'developed a tranquil philosophy for these moments of irritation' (RBC, 150). Acknowledging the psychic wound of his moral guilt, Henry is able to reconcile his thoughts with his actions.

Henry's insights retain a distinctive quality, even after his proper initiation, as his motives continue to arise as disordered and chaotic, but he has developed within himself an aptness to face reality; Henry is now imbued with a certain spirit of self-sacrifice, and silent acceptance of personal duty:

> He found that he could look back upon the brass and bombast of his earlier gospels and see them truly. [...] With the conviction came a store of assurance. He felt a quiet manhood, non-assertive but of sturdy and strong blood. He knew that he would no more quail before his guides wherever they should point. (RBC, 169)

His new-found attitude is predicated on his honest evaluation of himself, however imperfect it may still be. The crucial difference between this evaluation and what happens in the *Bildungsroman*, though, is that Henry is always reacting to the impressions of the sensible world, he never is proactive, never looks to pursue his own ethical formation (let alone self-cultivation): the American

initiates are always too engaged in the world for that. Despite his mental processes, his reactions while in conflict — perhaps due to the nature of war and the effect it has on man — are always instinctive, Henry's growth is always caused by instinctive reactions. It is not an organic and sustained process at all, it is a response to a sudden moment of confrontation with otherness, to brutal shatterings of innocence, yet such is, as Ziff has it, the true nature of Henry Fleming's growth, his initiation: 'He has now learned to control a certain degree of fear, and if he is reasonably lucky he will not soon be put into a situation in which the fear is so amplified that the compensatory swagger he now possesses will be inadequate to check its total seizure of him.'[57]

It can be said that the parodic elements in *The Red Badge of Courage* are stronger in the first half of the novel, and this fact — irony being a little subdued in the end of the narrative action — sustains the idea of Henry's growth in courage: 'He [Crane] began with an ironic view — an ironic view so strong that it veered toward a parody of heroism and war — but toward the end moved slowly toward a recognition that anyone who had been through what Henry had known must have learned something.'[58] In Henry's case, it is courage, courage that leads to manhood.[59] The maturation of rational aspects on Henry's part is not

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[57] Ziff (1967), p. 199. Henry's bravado is exactly what leads Cazemajou to question his development. Despite recognising that Henry has gained experience and a better knowledge of himself, Cazemajou is puzzled by the persistence of Henry's attitude, which mirrors his attitude in the beginning of the novel. See Cazemajou, in Walcutt (1974), p. 34.

[58] Walcutt (1974), p. 14

[59] Going back to Sadler's study, the ambiguity of Henry's surname must be noted: when used as a transitive verb, 'Fleme' means 'to drive out, to cause to flee'. In this sense, Henry is brave. See Sadler (1976).

the issue; what is important here and in the framework of the American narrative of initiation is Henry's courage, a reactive courage that originates from his brush with war, and not rational validation. At least, Henry now knows his place in the world, and will not go beyond his limitations and the limitations of his own morality; that is the only salvation that can be achieved, as LaFrance affirms:

> His [Henry's] eyes have finally opened, and he is now able to begin perceiving correctly the reality which has been before him and largely unchanged since the novel began. Henry's personal honesty can now assert itself in morally significant action, and he is ready to begin the difficult practice of manhood in an amoral universe.[60]

The man of courage is the quiet and honest individual who understands man's predicament in a hostile world.[61] That man has the ability to differentiate between right and wrong, and lives by it. Just as Henry's mother, against whose wishes he had enlisted, had told him in the beginning: 'Don't think of anything 'cept what's right.' (RBC, 7)

[60] LaFrance (1971), p. 123

[61] One can note with interest that in 'The Veteran', a short story by Crane that deals with the old years of Henry Fleming, Crane felt the need to wholly clarify the extent of Henry's initiation and ethical growth, as the protagonist of *The Red Badge of Courage* is now shown as honest and courageous. Henry admits his cowardice during the Civil War to his grandson, and this despite the latter's scepticism, and later dashes unselfishly into a burning barn to rescue a drunken man and the animals that are trapped inside. He dies an unheroic death doing his best for others.

3. An initiation into the grotesque: Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*

> There is no mere form that would be able to incarnate once and forever all of human possibilities and needs, no form in which he could exhaust himself down to the last word, like the tragic or epic hero.
> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Epic and Novel*

Of all the novels and narratives of initiation considered in this thesis, Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) is the one in which the pattern of the protagonist's initiation is the least discernible; consequently, the reader is almost invited to fill in the necessary gaps, and this creation of a metatext is a sign of engagement potentially worthwhile in terms of reader-response criticism. This indiscernible pattern can certainly be ascribed to the fragmentary nature of the short-story sequence, as will be further discussed below when analysing *The Nick Adams Stories*, and which raises the question of whether George Willard is indeed the protagonist of *Winesburg, Ohio* or if the city of Winesburg itself should be considered the protagonist.

The form of the short-story sequence, though not exactly a modern invention, has been none the less widely used in the twentieth century, as will be illustrated in more detail in the next chapter.[62] This happens, perhaps, and as in the case of *Winesburg, Ohio*, because the multiplicity of different voices and different perspectives that the form usually includes are some of the devices

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[62] J. Gerald Kennedy, in fact, traces the combination and linking of short fictional narratives back to Chaucer and Boccaccio and even to the ancients. See his 'Introduction' to *Modern American Short-Story Sequences: Composite Fictions and Fictive Communities*, ed. J. Gerald Kennedy (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

frequently employed to suggest the distinctiveness of the modern experience. And, as Kennedy notes, there are many other such devices, like 'fragmentation (in discrete, discontinuous short narratives), juxtaposition (in the purposive conjoining of complementary texts), and simultaneism (in the theoretically concurrent unfolding of separate actions)'.[63] All these are features of *Winesburg, Ohio*.

George's initiation is, then, fragmentary, and his growth, which does to some extent occur, is presented discontinuously; it is neither the organic *Werdegang* of the *Bildungsroman*, nor does it possess the coherence of growth presented in the stories that deal with the development of Nick Adams in Hemingway's short-story sequence. Like the short story form itself, George's growth is sometimes shown all too briefly; it is often a simple fragment in a fragmented continuum that can only be somehow understood through the linking of the stories of *Winesburg, Ohio*.

Of all characters in the sequence, George is the one who appears in most tales, and undoubtedly the thread that unites them. The process of his initiation, though not the only one, is an important theme of the narrative, as he is at the centre of most things that happen in Winesburg. Even if George does not appear

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[63] Ibid., p. ix. Anderson, whose shorter fiction is widely considered to be more accomplished than his novelistic work, attempted to convey both the modern world's fragmentation and the order underneath it: 'The life of reality is confused, disorderly, almost always without apparent purpose, whereas in the artist's imaginative life there is purpose. There is determination to give the tale, the song, the painting Form.' See Sherwood Anderson's *Notebook* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926), p. 75f.

in some of the stories, and in some others appears only as a peripheral character, his presence is still the unifying element of the sequence. And, as Ray Lewis White notes, when he is the central character 'he emerges more clearly as a cardinal protagonist and unifies Anderson's short fictions into the equivalent of [...] a novel of initiation'.[64] As will be seen in detail, whatever design might exist in *Winesburg, Ohio* becomes visible only through George's growth.

For the most part, it is possible for the reader to understand and relate the events in *Winesburg, Ohio* in the order in which they are presented. One can appreciate George's maturation, which culminates in the final stories, in the same way. George's growth will be a result of what he sees around him, of the many 'grotesques' — according to the terminology of 'The Book of the Grotesque', the prelude and first story of *Winesburg, Ohio* — present in the small mid-western town. As a reporter for the local newspaper and as the person sought by many of the other inhabitants of Winesburg who wish to tell their life stories, George has access to a variety of real human and social problems and frustrations. Glen A. Love even calls George the '*genius loci*' of Winesburg: 'He [George] provides also a kind of synecdoche for the village, standing, Janus-like, between innocence and experience, youth and maturity, rural past and urban future [...].

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[64] Ray Lewis White, *Winesburg, Ohio: An Exploration* (Boston: Twayne, 1990), p. 44f. Recognising the tales' imperfect chronological order, and to further persuade the reader into accepting the sequence as one of initiation, White places the stories in their right sequence. The effect of this, none the less, is not as convincing as in *The Nick Adams Stories*, for instance.

[The inhabitants] reach out for contact through him.'[65] As an aspiring writer who wants to know people, George is then able to obtain a glimpse into the human psyche, and accordingly into his own.[66]

The inhabitants of Winesburg are called grotesques because their behaviour reveals distorted variations of the human psyche. Unlike George, they show no capacity to grow or evolve; they remain trapped in their various predicaments. The extreme nature of their conditions, as suggested in the first story of *Winesburg, Ohio*, is one of the basic themes of the sequence. A person becomes grotesque because s/he becomes a slave to one set of thoughts, one view of life, *one truth*, a single way of feeling, thinking, being:

> It was the truths that made the people grotesques. The old man had quite an elaborate theory concerning the matter. It was his notion that the moment one of the people took one of the truths to himself, called it his truth, and tried to live his life by it, he became a grotesque and the truth he embraced became a falsehood. (WO, 24)

The grotesques of Winesburg thus become deformed because they lose touch with the complexities of life, which can never be reduced to a single, exclusive truth.[67] Whatever potentialities the grotesques might have — or have had —, they cannot attain them because they can no longer renounce their one truth.

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[65] Glen A. Love, 'Winesburg, Ohio and the Rhetoric of Silence', in *American Literature*, 40 (1968), 49. Elmer Cowley, one of the characters of the sequence, curiously sees George in that very same way in 'Queer': 'George Willard, he felt, belonged to the town, typified the town, represented in his person the spirit of the town.' (WO, 194)

[66] Under this light, George can also be seen as the implied narrator of the tales. See David Stouck, 'Winesburg, Ohio as a Dance of Death', in *American Literature*, 49 (1977), 536.

[67] This could easily be compared with the study of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*.

A grotesque is thus a character whose mind has been twisted by life and become "mutilated" as a consequence. But the body of any given grotesque might also reflect the grotesque within, as in the case of Wash Williams, the ape-like misogynist of 'Respectability', or of the queer-looking Elmer Cowley, for instance. Yet what is meant in the end is that the grotesque is for the most part a psychological fabrication, as George gradually learns to see that beauty does not lie in the eye of the beholder, but in the unseen and unspeakable predicates of individual character. Dr Reefy, for example, a character whose knuckles look like 'twisted apples', is one of the grotesques who have such a positive character: 'Though physically unattractive, Dr Reefy possesses an inner beauty, which is reflected in his relationship with his wife. [...] He [also] offers comfort to Elizabeth, George Willard's mother. He has an intuitive understanding of the problems of both women and offers unbounded sympathy.'[68] The grotesques can also be seen sympathetically, and the narrator often sees them in that light.

What stands out most in the descriptions of the town's grotesques is the repetitiveness of their behaviour and their internal rigidity, so to speak, which results in their social and spiritual atrophy. As their own truths cannot be communicated to or understood by others, the greatest affliction of the grotesques is their ultimate, desperate loneliness. They are quite incapable of

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[68] Welford Dunaway Taylor, *Sherwood Anderson* (New York: Ungar, 1977), p. 27. See the story 'Paper Pills' for the description of Dr Reefy.

abandoning it. This is why the grotesques reach out to George, for the weight of their loneliness is what they truly cannot bear. Their loneliness, furthermore, corresponds to the narrator's view of the society of his time, where people are cut off from each other, as Kennedy observes:

> The inability of the grotesques to communicate the deepest truths of their experience leaves them forever ridiculed, misunderstood, and exasperated by the inadequacy of language. [...] Repeatedly the twisted figures of *Winesburg* express their mistrust of words or their frustration at being unable to express their sentiments; condemned to silence, each feels cut off from an imagined community.[69]

This powerlessness to communicate is hardly stated more boldly by the narrator than in the case of Enoch Robinson in 'Loneliness': 'He knew what the wanted to say, but he also knew that he could never by any possibility say it.' (WO, 169) Indeed, made mute by their grotesque nature, characters often resort to physical violence as a way of overcoming their inadequacies. George is hit three times during the course of the sequence — by Kate Swift, Elmer Cowley and Ed Handby —, because these three characters are incapable of articulating their innermost feelings and thoughts.

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[69] Kennedy (1995), 'From Anderson's *Winesburg* to Carver's *Cathedral*: The Short-story sequence and the Semblance of Community', p. 200. Kennedy further considers this individual isolation to be confirmed by the breaks between stories, and this despite Anderson's use of connective strategies, such as juxtaposition of stories; repetition of images, such as rooms or hands; and/or the tracing of George's maturation. Moreover, the action of *Winesburg, Ohio* occurs in the 1890s, the period that, according to Thomas Yingling (see same page), signals the end of the collective experience in America. Small mid-western towns lost their sense of community due to growing individualism and growing importance of material values. Communication became scarce (in *Winesburg, Ohio*, and in a quite prescient way, it is the reporter who is sought for private revelations). The time in which the narrative takes place was then a time of change, as the text confirms: 'A revolution has in fact taken place. The coming of industrialism, attended by all the roar and rattle of affairs, the shrill cries of millions of new voices that have come among us from overseas, the going and coming of trains, the growth of cities, the building of the inter-urban car lines that weave in and out of towns and past farmhouses, and now in these later days the coming of the automobiles has worked a tremendous change in the lives and in the habits of thought of our people of Mid-America.' (WO, 70f) For more on the historical setting, see White (1990), p. 1ff.

Still, the fact that the grotesques come to him makes George's role all the more clear and meaningful. They share their frustrations with him, but this negativity eventually ends up being positive for George, as it allows him to share the grotesques' life experiences without having to submit himself to the actuality of such experiences. George is important to the town's inhabitants, but they are also important to him, because they 'come to him convinced that it is *they* who have something to give'.[70] What the grotesques share with George is valuable for the young reporter, as he learns about life and people in ways that might not have been normally possible for a young man with as little experience as him; certainly not until he got older and had been, like the grotesques, battered by life.

George's confrontation with the grotesques' otherness gives him a kind of fragmentary maturity, an early knowledge of things. Potentially, he can extract much from the tales they tell him, meanings that go beyond the mere life stories that account for most of what he is being told. If the grotesques are ultimately unable to communicate what they truly want, there is some important advice in what they tell George: Wing Biddlebaum, in 'Hands', counsels him to 'begin to dream' and forget 'the roar of voices' of the town's inhabitants, who continuously attempt to influence George; Doctor Parcival, in 'The Philosopher',

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[70] Edwin Fussell, *'Winesburg, Ohio*: Art and Isolation', in *The Achievement of Sherwood Anderson: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Ray Lewis White (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), p. 107. Considering George — who has in fact aspirations as a writer — to be an artist, Fussell goes on to say that this short-story sequence is a *Künstlerroman*. More accurately, he thinks that George and the inhabitants of the town are mutually dependent.

says that George should look at all people as Christ-like, and write a book about how all people in the world are crucified; in 'A Man of Ideas' and 'The Teacher', Joe Welling and Kate Swift, respectively, advise George about the art of writing — Kate, George's former English teacher, urges him to try and understand people and 'not become a mere peddler of words'. (WO, 30 and 163)

These pieces of advice may not be wholly sound, because of their grotesque sources; the narrative voice, none the less, never totally dismisses the grotesques' wisdom, which will prove itself to be of importance for George's development: 'He [George] is more than a good listener. The reader senses, along with the boy, that these [the town's inhabitants'] confessions are precious, that out of them will grow the insight and awareness which must accompany his development as a writer.'[71] And the ultimate concern of the writer, after all, is to depict, and more importantly, to understand, human nature.

In terms of George's initiation, the inhabitants of Winesburg are also reminders of the dangers of the human condition: if one bears Love's opinion in mind, George stands, after all, between the grotesques, Janus-like, an interface of different possibilities. It is possible that George, too, may become a grotesque, but by being exposed to various truths, he may avoid becoming subservient to one. The difference between George and the grotesques lies in their capacity for development: George's 'essential quality must be defined as a capacity for the

[71] Love (1968), 50

growth which he [Anderson] refuses to attribute to any of the grotesques. It is indeed the very description of their grotesqueness that each of them is forever frozen somewhere below the level of a full and proper development'.[72]

However fragmentary in appearance, George's initiation does occur. The reader is called to imagine that George undergoes it because of everything that is around him; the grotesques trigger off him the realisation, for good or bad, of human possibilities, possibilities that also lie within himself. As the narrator states, by watching the town's inhabitants in the light of the grotesque he has 'been able to understand many people and things that [he] was never able to understand before' (WO, 23). To live as fully as possible, George must not become enslaved to one truth and strangle all others: '[If George] does not stick to any one formulation of them [the truths], ideally [that will] lead him to an intenser enlargement of life and not to a constricted compass of response.'[73] It is better to have an open than a closed mind — even if that means living in uncertainty — than to try and blindly define the meaning of existence with an absolute truth. This can only limit man's possibilities in life, closing rather than opening them. Life is much larger than that, it is forever changing, forever ongoing, and George had better adapt along with it.

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[72] Fussell, in White (1966), p. 109
[73] Epifanio San Juan, Jr., 'Vision and Reality: A Reconsideration of Sherwood Anderson's "Winesburg, Ohio"', in *American Literature*, 35 (1963), 138

In *Winesburg, Ohio*, he now and again has insights into the complexities and possibilities of life, and the reader is again called upon to put all these pieces together. In 'An Awakening', George dreams of order in the world: 'In every little thing there must be order, in the place where men work, in their clothes, in their thoughts. I myself must be orderly. I must learn that law. [...] In my little way I must begin to learn something, to give and swing and work with life, with the law.' This dream vision makes him feel 'oddly detached and apart from all life', but he is still peddling with empty words, big words, 'words without meaning' (WO, 183 and 185). And furthermore (or perhaps as a consequence), his pretensions are smashed when Ed hits him because of Belle Carpenter.

It is only in 'Sophistication', after his mother passes away, that George's sense of self-importance is laid to rest, in what is, and despite the nature of his relationship with his mother, George's true initiation into "sophisticated" adulthood. 'Already he hears death calling' (WO, 235), and the most humane way to face this brevity of life is to escape loneliness by reaching out for another person, because that is a truth George cannot face alone.

It becomes then clear to him that death is the only unavoidable occurrence in life. If that awareness causes nothing but suffering, then, as Doctor Parcival said to George, the fate of man might be indeed to suffer — but man will still have to exist regardless of that suffering. The death of Elizabeth Willard, the only way in which she could release herself from her loneliness, quickens George's

comprehension of that fact, but his response to it is affirmative, it looks for life's presence in others. The end of his initiation is, then, confirmation.

While he is sharing the silence of this quiet realisation and acceptance with Helen White, he comprehends that loneliness and death come to everyone. One can only acknowledge that fact and try to mitigate it — and nothing else — by caring for others. George and Helen's voiceless love, as Fussell says, is 'essentially the shared acceptance by two people of the irremediable fact, in the nature of things, of their final separateness. But these are truths beyond the comprehension of the grotesques, and one reason why they, who will not accept their isolation, are so uniformly without love'.[74]

George, and for that matter, Helen, share the same fate: they will die, as the narrator muses: 'He [a boy] knows that in spite of all the stout talk of his fellows he must live and die in uncertainty, a thing blown by the winds, a thing destined like corn to wilt in the sun.' (WO, 234) But the two youths can none the less love, and their silent company is thus filled with empathy, if not with verbal communication. This empathy, this ultimate communication, a communion based on understanding, is even more necessary in this world, in communities such as Winesburg, where it was disappearing, because only death is certain. Realising this, George achieves the only sophistication possible in life.

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[74] Fussell, in White (1966), p. 113

Few words are said between George and Helen: they understand. Instinctively, they do understand, and life can be grasped better if approached by means of instinct rather than reason, or by means of words that are often empty, devoid of significance, as George's word-induced new-found courage that evaporates after the fight with Ed reveals. The grotesques attempt to release their frustrations by talking to George, yet what seems implicit here is that important truths can only be whispered, if uttered at all.

While earlier George had missed the point of what Kate was trying to tell him, he now fully appreciates the value of her advice, given at first to help him with his writing. He must turn towards feeling rather than words: 'The thing to learn is to know what people are thinking about, not what they say.' (WO, 163)[75] Like Helen, who runs away from the empty words of her mother and of her college instructor, George forgets the empty words he had uttered in 'An Awakening'. He has now grown and is ready for his 'Departure'; and by going somewhere else, he conforms to the wandering nature of the American initiate. He escapes from the society he knows, because Winesburg, despite being seen by George in a sympathetic light, implied a communal life that would ultimately mean victimisation for him.

[75] Anderson offers the same kind of advice to his son, he too an artist, in a letter from 1927: 'Don't listen too much to what people say. Try to think what they are thinking and feeling.' See Anderson, *The Portable Sherwood Anderson*, ed. Horace Gregory (New York: Viking, 1949), p. 595.

George's instinctive insight into existence leads him to recognise both life's limitations and his own insignificance.[76] The role of the American protagonist of narratives of initiation is usually seen as insignificant in the larger scheme of things. Standing side by side with the vastness of life in all its aspects, his own plight always seems somewhat trivial. But the initiate, for he is an American protagonist, always appears to have the ability to dream on, to look ahead with confidence, or, at the very least, never lose hope. It is the same with George: 'He stayed that way for a long time and when he aroused himself and again looked out of the car window the town of Winesburg had disappeared and his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood.' (WO, 247) Everything that George experiences in the town of Winesburg has an effect on him and contributes to his growth as a man; as a writer, he is now ready to recount the tales and lives of the grotesques. He has "endured" the grotesque; he has avoided becoming like one of his townspeople, forever the dreamer, as Wing had told him to be, and George thus manages to forget the roar of voices. His initiation consists in the search for some kind of order between whatever opposite truths might appear to him in his life. The world does not offer ultimate meaning, and as the chaos of life might be grotesque enough as it is, man must strive for order, as George has learned, some kind of order in a confusing world.

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[76] San Juan, Jr. goes as far as to call this fact the existential tone of *Winesburg, Ohio*: 'After retrospective meditations comes the introspective search for the existential dimension of life, arriving finally at an insight as potently illuminating in application to the spectacle of the tragic human condition offered to us by Pascal, Kierkegaard, or Kafka.' See San Juan, Jr., 35 (1963), 143.

George's initiation is at the core *of Winesburg, Ohio* and is also what gives order to the sequence: 'Through Winesburg runs the slow and often hidden current of George Willard's growth towards maturity; often the stream is subterranean and we are surprised to see where it comes out [...]. But all the time the book's current is steadily setting toward the ultimate "Departure."'[77] The growth George experiences through his initiation into the grotesque is not the product of intellectual forces. His initiation is a search for a reality that has to do with true human feelings, accessed by empathy and natural feeling rather than intellect and empty utterances.

[77] Fussell, in White (1966), p. 108f

IV

The modern literary protagonist and the challenge to tradition

1. An impression of Nick Adams: Modernism and the art of the short story

> The age demanded an image
> Of its accelerated grimace,
> Something for the modern stage,
> Not, at any rate, an Attic grace.
> Ezra Pound, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*

Comparing a novel — *Der Zauberberg* — with a short-story sequence — *The Nick Adams Stories* — should pose no problems in terms of a comparative literary study, as different literary forms are frequently compared, even with non-literary ones. This has to do with one of the possible notions of what comparative literature is, which is, after all, the comparison of texts across cultures. Only in this way, without holding excessively to form, but considering the contents of the text, is it possible to understand the effect that a play like Shakespeare's *Hamlet* had on Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, for instance.

The short stories that make up the sequence that came to be known as *The Nick Adams Stories* take place, historically, at around the same period in which the fictional narrative of *Der Zauberberg* occurs. Both the novel and the short-story sequence are set in the time span from the beginning of the century to the First World War. The action of *Der Zauberberg* ends with that war, yet Mann only concluded the writing of the novel in 1924, having started it in 1912-13. So

both texts deal, in a way, with the problems that existed in the Western world both before and after the First World War period. The effects that the changed conditions of that historical period had upon modern man will be widely discussed in the remainder of this thesis, as will its effects on man's psychological and spiritual development. In *The Nick Adams Stories*, I will try to see how those conditions affect the protagonist, much as I will do during my reading of *Der Zauberberg*.

In genre terms, Ernest Hemingway's *The Nick Adams Stories* (1924-1972) are obviously not a *Bildungsroman*, because they are not even a *Roman*, a novel.[1] Still, some critics consider this short-story sequence to be a *Bildungsroman*, as seen above. But, again, to consider a sequence of short stories a *Bildungsroman* demonstrates little knowledge of the tenets and of the history of that genre. What can be said about *The Nick Adams Stories* is that the connection between its constituent parts, that is, the fact that the stories can be seen in a sequence, makes for a sustained development of a young character as much as in any other literary form. Viewed in this way, it can be said to belong to the tradition of the

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[1] Most of the stories in which Nick Adams is the central character were published in *In Our Time* (1925), *Men Without Women* (1927) and *Winner Take Nothing* (1933). Eight of the tales in *The Nick Adams Stories* only appeared posthumously, as is indicated in Appendix II, and they were all first published in Philip Young's 1972 edition of *The Nick Adams Stories*. Although these eight stories were not sanctioned by Hemingway by being published, it is clear that they deal with the same Nick Adams who appears in stories published during Hemingway's lifetime. For the purpose of this thesis, the eight stories mentioned above help to shed light on Nick's character, his growth, and on the status of his initiation. For a comprehensive list of Hemingway's shorter fiction, see Jackson J. Benson (ed.), *New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 417ff.

American narrative of initiation — with *Winesburg, Ohio*, especially, coming to mind —, rather than being close to the core issues of the German *Bildungsroman*.

The Nick Adams Stories can be called a narrative of initiation, then, as the stories that compose it are explicitly linked. As they become a composite of several short stories, they can even be said to come close to the spirit of modernity, more specifically, the spirit of literary Modernism. In that sense, to coin a new expression, their sequence could truly be seen as a *Zeiterzählung*.

The short story, as a work of prose fiction, can be analysed, technically at least, in the same way as the novel, despite its much-reduced extension. Yet there is no agreement among critics when it comes to defining the principles of the short story. This starts even with its very name, as the term 'short story' serves to designate both short stories of diminutive length, such as Hemingway's vignettes of *In Our Time* (1925), and more complex and more extended forms like Mann's *Mario und der Zauberer* (1930). It is for these reasons that terms as 'the short short story' have been created, and also why many longer short stories are sometimes called 'novellas' or 'novelettes'. Length, then, is one of the factors that make the short story hard to define as a literary form. Other factors relate to the question whether the story must have a central moment or moments in it or not; or if a compression of language is necessary, meaning, for example, that all the words in a short story have to be *mots justes*, and which literary techniques are used to achieve that effect.

As seen before, to critics such as Kennedy, the short story is, in itself, an age-old literary form. None the less, the modern or modernist short story has its own peculiar mechanisms, which in more than one way represent a break with the past, something that is, after all, often viewed as the very essence of this period in terms of literary history. The modernist short story is a highly self-conscious literary form, perhaps even more so than the novel. It is concerned with the dramatisation of one specific moment; thus it can be seen as being, so to speak, the literary equivalent of a snapshot. Comparing a modernist short story with a single visual image is not that strange or uncommon, as the short story has, in many ways, and as Valerie Shaw says, a connection with the art of snapshot photography, not least because both date from the same period.[2] Contemporaneity, of course, is not enough, yet Modernism in literature searched for a relation with the real that was not in any way connected to nineteenth-century rhetoric; there was a deliberate preference for a more concentrated language. When this fact is added to a certain modernist passion for the moment, or rather, for the moments that usually escape the human eye — note the connection with Walter Benjamin's concept of the 'optical unconscious' —, then Shaw's analogy between the short story and photography becomes that much clearer.[3]

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[2] Valerie Shaw, *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (London and New York: Longman, 1983), p. 14

[3] The human eye cannot discern many movements, even banal ones, of everyday existence, whereas a photographic camera can. With this in mind, Benjamin considers that photography reveals what he calls the optical unconscious, an image already there, but out of the reach of the conscious mind. For more, see Walter Benjamin, 'Kleine Geschichte der Photographie', in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 2.1.

The short story usually depicts a moment or a phase of a fictional process that the reader can — and is frequently even tempted to — imagine as much larger. Seizing those fleeing moments in time seems to be the goal of any good short story. Sherwood Anderson, who excelled in this shorter form, said that the purpose of the artist is 'just to fix the moment, in a painting, in a tale, in a poem'.[4] Anderson, as seen above, is a great influence on Hemingway's early work, which is mostly composed of short stories, and the reference he makes to painting can also be related to Hemingway's own views, because Hemingway tried to write in the same way as the Impressionists painted — *ut pictura poesis*, as it were —, as he was a great admirer of their style of painting, of their originality and interest in the mundane, of the impression of the moment they were able to capture.[5]

The impression, the fleetingness of the moment is certainly connected to the life experiences of the modern individual, who felt her/his own finitude to a very large degree, what surrounded her/him in the world being viewed as ephemeral. The sense of lack of continuity was perceived as a concrete reality, and the short story became the most appropriate form to represent modern life and the condition of the modern individual. The brevity of the form relates to that

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[4] Sherwood Anderson, *A Story Teller's Story* (New York: Huebsch, 1924), p. 403

[5] See Joseph M. Flora, *Hemingway's Nick Adams* (Batton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), p. 6ff. The fictional character Nick Adams also says that he always 'wanted to write like Cézanne painted' (NAS, 'On Writing', 239).

condition, and as there is little beyond the episode, the short story is in itself episodic. It is meant to capture the essence of the experience of modernity, and more important, it also captures the essence of literary Modernism.

At the heart of the modernist vision was the conviction that the old structures that had until then sustained the existence of the Western world were in ruins. Social and political programmes, religious and moral creeds, artistic and aesthetic views, all were bankrupt, and a new order was being sought. In general terms, one can say that human existence was now considered to be fragmented, so previous notions of order and unity and structure in art were thought of as fraudulent, wishful thinking, an illusion that actually masked the real world. So despite literary Modernism's greater focus on the novel and on poetry, there is no denying the short story's space as a vehicle for the ideas of that particular period.[6] All the above-mentioned considerations about the modern individual relate in one way or another to the modernist artist's sense of alienation from the humdrum of everyday social life.

The aestheticism of the *fin-de*-siècle, with its peculiar withdrawal from the "normal" world to ideal realms, metamorphosed in Modernism into something far more radical, into multidimensional experiments in subject and, more

[6] I am reluctant to speak of Modernism as a movement, because of the variety of Modernisms, as it were, that exist; it is too broad a term, not a monolithic ideological formation. This is why I prefer too see Modernism in a timeline, as a literary period, albeit one with indeterminate beginnings and endings. For an extensive analysis of the several aspects — and phases — of Modernism, see *Modernism: 1890-1930*, eds Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (Hassocks: Harvester, 1978) and/or Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (London: Macmillan, 1995).

emphatically, in form; and the short story can be said to be a part of those formal experiments. Artistic movements like Imagism, Vorticism, Futurism and Cubism tended to invert artistic rules. Paintings stopped telling stories, so to speak, and broke with former conventions and with the rules of taste of previous centuries: as Michael Reynolds says, artists like Picasso, Braque, Miró or Gris discarded plot and narrative and made an impact with new formal guidelines.[7] Mimetic, historicist representations were largely abandoned, and the artist attempted to build a parallel world that would add something to the real instead of only looking for something already "out there".

In music, composers like Stravinsky and Schoenberg experimented with variations in melody, harmony and rhythm, their piece of music featuring dissonance, harmonic discontinuity and atonalism rather than an ordered formal structure and appealing harmonies of tone. 'Out of key', it was in such disagreement with the prevailing taste that Stravinsky's own composition 'The Rite of Spring' caused a scandal in the Parisian concert hall where it was premiered in 1913.[8] The age of jazz, with its modern and urban rhythms that best expressed the fast pace of modern life, was indeed arriving.

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[7] Reynolds adds that Hemingway knew some of these artists and was very familiar with their work, in some cases even collecting it. See 'Hemingway's *In Our Time*: The Biography of a Book', in Kennedy (1995), p. 45.

[8] See *Art of the 20th Century*, ed. Jean-Louis Ferrier, trans. Walter D. Glanze et al. (France: Éditions du Chêne, 1999), p. 142.

All these innovations in different artistic fields reveal a violation of conventions, and the modern short story — described sometimes as nothing but a story where the beginning and the end are omitted — is also a challenge to literary convention. The modern short story seems many times to begin arbitrarily, to advance without explanation and to end without resolution; it is fragmentary, not continuous, as previous short stories were, with their paying more attention to story lines and not to single, isolated moments.

The formal characteristic that is more apparent in a modern short story is that character of fragmentation, or rather, its construction out of fragments. This is also true for the modernist painting, sculpture or musical piece. The modernist long work is frequently a body of fragments, the brief work like the short story is a self-conscious fragment. It omits much, does not interpret, summarise or explain, the perspective changes continually, and this is very distant from the certainties of traditional literature.

It can be said that at the centre of the modern literary text, as in the modern experience of life, lies the loss of a sense of security. The short story too is suggestive rather than assertive, and it is the reader who has to assess its degree of coherence or not, or the moments where he might experience the effect intended by the story, or by the narrator. But, if literary fragments were to be arranged in a sequence, the result could be something like *The Nick Adams Stories*. Hemingway placed the published short stories that are part of it in

different short story collections, with no regard for their chronological order. However, as Philip Young, who arranged them chronologically, notes, some of them are hard to understand if not seen in connection with the others.[9] This is at its most noticeable in the case of one of Hemingway's best-known stories, called 'Big Two-Hearted River'.

This particular story appeared in *In Our Time*, Hemingway's first collection of short stories that was published in the United States, and this made it hard, if not to enjoy it, then at the very least to interpret the story. It is spoken of as a story about war without any mention of it, and it is said that Hemingway was pleased with the end-result.[10] In fact, the declarative and terse prose of the story clearly illustrates the so-called Hemingway style, which has been emulated as few others have. Its influence on much subsequent American storytelling is undeniable, with the names of Kerouac, Mailer or Carver coming to mind.

But 'Big Two-Hearted River' only makes sense in thematic terms if read after 'A Way You'll Never Be', which precedes it in fictional chronological terms. However, this last short story was published only eight years and a number of books after 'Big Two-Hearted River'. Consequently, Young considers it is advantageous to read the stories of Nick Adams as a sequence: 'Indeed in this aspect the book is almost a "novel", for some of its stories are

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[9] See Young's 'Preface' (NAS, 5).
[10] See Reynolds, in Kennedy (1995), p. 41.

incomprehensible if one does not see the point, and it is often subtle, of some earlier story.'[11] And this view is shared by many other critics, like Carlos Baker: 'They [the short stories] might be arranged under some such title as "The Education of Nicholas Adams".'[12] Baker also frequently mentions the influence of the pattern of *Winesburg, Ohio* in Hemingway's writing.[13]

The stories can be organised chronologically, then, yet this should not mean that they cannot also be fully appreciated in isolation and on their own terms. None the less, the repetition of the character Nick Adams makes it sustainable that the stories can be read as an ordered fictional construct.[14] In a sequence, every integral part, every short story, is independent, but has a relation of interdependence with the other stories, and this only enriches the whole, it does not damage it.

Young's arrangement of the sequence attracted much criticism, and, as Joseph M. Flora points out, he left out a story — 'A Day's Wait' (WTN) — that I

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[11] Philip Young, *Ernest Hemingway*, in *Pamphlets on American Writers* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959), p. 4

[12] Carlos Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 128

[13] Henry Dan Piper also points out the fact that Nick Adams 'bear[s] marked family resemblances to [...] George Willard'. See Piper, 'Social Criticism in the American Novel of the Nineteen Twenties', in *The American Novel and the Nineteen Twenties*, eds Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer (London: Edward Arnold, 1971), p. 68

[14] One of Hemingway's abandoned literary projects was a novel called *Along with Youth*, as it is known from biographical studies. The story 'Night before Landing', part of *The Nick Adams Stories*, where Nick is aboard a boat bound for Europe and the First World War, was supposed to be the beginning of that novel project.

too believe belongs to the sequence.[15] The main fault with Young's sequencing of the tales is that he tried to couple the stories with Hemingway's personal biography, something that seems, for the most part, to be a false connection. Flora also criticises Young's chronological succession of stories, as the relevance or not of arranging the stories is what is at the heart of most debates surrounding *The Nick Adams Stories*. I agree with Flora when he says that 'The End of Something' and 'The Three-Day Blow' should immediately follow Nick's childhood stories, as Young's placement of these stories after Nick's return from war does not sit well with the adolescent immaturity Nick displays in them.[16] I also prefer to see the story 'The Last Good Country' as following 'The Three-Day Blow', as there seems to be a close connection between Nick's experience with Marjorie in 'The End of Something' and what Nick tells Mr John in 'The Last Good Country'.[17]

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[15] See Flora (1982), p. 216ff. Even though Nick is not named in 'A Day's Wait', and the central character is a child, there are many observations in it that relate to earlier stories involving Nick, so the child emerges more clearly as being the son of 'Fathers and Sons' — Nick's son. Young thought this was a story about the boy and not about Nick, which is a somewhat feeble argument, since Young includes 'The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife', which is mainly about Nick's father, in the sequence. Flora furthermore inserts another short story — 'Wine of Wyoming' — in the sequence, but this story seems to me to be more autobiographical than anything else. The narrator is not named, but there does not seem to be enough evidence in the story to insert it in the sequence. The tone is more comic than what the reader has come to expect from a Nick story. For Flora's view, see p. 223ff.

[16] Ibid., see p. 13f, 52f and 60f. None the less, I consider Flora's changing of the order of 'Ten Indians' and 'The Indians Moved Away' quite immaterial. I also agree with Young's view that 'Big Two-Hearted River' — being a story about coping with the war, as some military imagery in it suggests — immediately follows 'In Another Country', the last of the stories that takes place in Europe before the end of the war, and not after Nick's marriage, as Flora suggests (see p. 180f). I propose my own chronology of the short stories dealing with Nick in Appendix II.

[17] See Hemingway (1999), p. 99f. The inclusion of 'The Last Good Country' in the sequence deserves closer examination, because it is a fragment of an unfinished novel. It marks perhaps the last time Hemingway wrote a story in which Nick was a character, and, seen as part of the sequence, it helps to shed some light on many previous events of Nick's life. Flora considers it to be different from all other Nick stories, and that can certainly be attributed to Hemingway's age at the time of writing. Yet the reader can clearly recognise Nick as a young adolescent — no longer a child — in the story. Ibid., p. 253ff.

A chronological arrangement of the stories is more important than imperative, yet it would be foolish to refuse reading the short stories that include Nick Adams in chronological sequence. Although I consider Young's reading to be less convincing than Flora's, each reader may in fact arrange them according to his own knowledge and perception of Hemingway's shorter fiction: in a composite such as a short-story sequence, which *The Nick Adams Stories* turn out to be, the reader has to supply important contexts, s/he must be able to critically look at the stories. Furthermore, the fact that both these critics divide Nick's stories into chapters named by themselves seems to be unnecessary, adding only to confusion. For the purpose of this thesis, i.e. to ascertain the progression of Nick's initiation, I believe it is relevant to read the stories chronologically. As I will eventually regard Nick's initiation as an ascending process of confirmation, I consider the stories in chronological sequence according to the extent in which Nick, almost with each new story, becomes more mature and assertive.

Nick Adams is one of the few Hemingway characters of whose childhood the reader is aware.[18] His development is narrated, from childhood to adolescence and to adulthood, in his different situations in life as a soldier, a veteran, a writer, and a father, and Nick becomes not too different from any other adult of his time. His route through life is ascending, as will be seen, even

[18] Coming from Hemingway's native Michigan, Nick Adams also becomes a writer and is given Hemingway's date of birth, 1899, in the story 'A Way You'll Never Be'. It is because of coincidences such as these that Hemingway's characters are often regarded as fictional selves.

adjusting to social norms, despite life's negative turns, so Nick can be seen as a consistent character, and other fictional personas that appear in more than one of the stories about Nick's life help to give it a sense of succession. Hemingway did not join the stories himself, but the attentive and interested Hemingway reader knows that there is a link between all of them.

Many literary critics do not trouble to distinguish the connected set of short stories from the multifaceted modern novel, as each includes elements that make for both connection and interruption. The short-story sequence is a prominent literary form of the twentieth century, and especially so in the first few decades of it. Anderson's case has already been discussed, and James Joyce's *Dubliners* is also frequently mentioned as another good example of the short-story sequence.[19]

The short-story sequence is situated, in a way, between the short story and the novel. It has been labelled in a variety of different ways, as the 'short story cycle', the 'short story composite', and as the 'rovelle', a fusion of 'roman' and 'novelle'.[20] What is uncontested is its status as a unified sequence, with its progressive moments and cumulative fictional experiences that give meaning to the whole. If the sequence is indeed a loose and free-flowing form, this can be seen in a positive way, as can be assumed from the words of D. H. Lawrence,

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[19] See, for example, Kennedy's 'Introduction' (1995).
[20] Ibid., p. vii

who also considered that literature needed more freedom: 'We need more looseness. [...] We need more easy transition from mood to mood and from deed to deed. A good deal of the meaning of life and art lies in the apparent dull spaces, the pauses, the unimportant passages. They are truly passages, the places of passing over.'[21]

The sequence can thus be seen as spontaneous, and in Nick's case, many of the things that are important to him do lie in the silence between the stories that compose the book. The same can be said of what happens *in* the actual stories, because Hemingway encouraged the search for meaning where apparently no meaning existed, as he wrote in *Death in the Afternoon*:

> If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water.[22]

Despite the obvious face value of Hemingway's short stories, there are other levels on which they can be read. A review of Hemingway's first book of short fiction said, after all, and quite accurately, that his stories seized 'moments when life is condensed and clean-cut and significant, presenting them in minute narratives that eliminate every useless word. Each tale is much longer than the

[21] D. H. Lawrence, 'Introduction to *Cavalleria Rusticana*', in *Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. Anthony Beal (London: Heinemann, 1955), p. 289
[22] Hemingway (1977), p. 170f

measure of its lines'.[23] So, in the same way, it must be possible as well to make much more of *The Nick Adams Stories*.

2. *Humaniora*: *Der Zauberberg* as *Bildungsroman* in the context of its time

> 'I don't fear man. I do better: I respect and admire him. And pride: I am ten times prouder of that immortality which he does possess than ever he of that heavenly one of his delusion. Because man and his folly —'
> 'Will endure,' the corporal said.
> 'They will do more,' the old general said proudly. 'They will prevail.'
> William Faulkner, *A Fable*

Although he was left out of Harold Bloom's Western literary canon, it is my belief that Thomas Mann is one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century, and that his *Der Zauberberg* is arguably one of the masterpieces of the century that has just passed. *Der Zauberberg*, it can be said, is one of those narratives that is so completely self-sufficient that one does not need to search for meaning outside the text. It was not for nothing that Mann himself frequently referred to it as being *hermetisch*.[24] But to achieve this character of universality, *Der Zauberberg* also looks at the world and at man, at universal problems, so to speak. In fact, the scope of the novel is so broad that it can be said to chronicle the entire European intellectual tradition, at the same time as it mirrors with precision the problems, anxieties and desires of its own epoch. In this sense *Der Zauberberg* is a *Zeitroman*, but also in others: the nature of time itself is one of

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[23] Baker (1956), p. 23
[24] See Thomas Mann, 'Einführung in den Zauberberg', in *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1960), 11, 612.

its main subjects, among plenty of others, as great attention is paid to both "real time" and to the time of narration: 'Einmal historisch, indem er [Der Zauberberg] das innere Bild einer Epoche, der europäischen Vorkriegszeit zu entwerfen versucht, dann aber, weil die reine Zeit selbst sein Gegenstand ist.'[25]

Yet having such a large scope, *Der Zauberberg* cannot be made to fit into only one type of the novel. It is also a consummate example of a *Bildungsroman*, and as is frequently said, it works as both a parody and a renewal of it. The ironic tone used by the narrator towards the protagonist — as well as towards all other characters, with perhaps the one exception being the soldier who is the protagonist's cousin — sees it through, making *Der Zauberberg* a parody even in the most common sense of the word.

The novel does display a parodic use of textual materials from previous *Bildungsromane*, mainly *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, but parody in *Der Zauberberg* lies also in the fact that the protagonist effectively goes on a seven-year leave from the world to dwell among the patients of a sanatorium. It is among sick people that he is to be *gebildet*, thus discovering the fundamental principles of life among the sick and the dying, somehow confirming what one of the physicians of the sanatorium where the fictional action takes place says, namely that the concepts man and perfect health are seemingly incompatible (ZB, 29).

[25] Ibid., 611

The aspect of renewal, however, is no less important, and entails the reaffirmation and reinvention of the humanist values that lie at the heart of the *Bildungsroman* as genre, this time in a period of crisis, i.e. in the changed Europe of the post-First World War period. If the original *humanitas* of the fifteenth century asked for a change in culture from the dark ages, now it is felt that again change is necessary, to permit the development of human personality after Europe's return to darkness and barbarism. This new humanism aspires to be eternal and, however redundant it may sound, truly humane. It is not seen as a state of mind that had been totally confined to an historical period, it rather should be seen as something to assist all of mankind at any given time, especially in the period around the First World War. It is for that reason that, according to T. J. Reed, 'in appearance it [*Der Zauberberg*] is a parody of the German *Bildungsroman* [...]. In reality it is a *Bildungsroman* in good earnest'.[26]

Irony in *Der Zauberberg* could also reside in the fact that it attempts to recreate a humanist view of life in a time of folly — perhaps a belief in humanism is the greatest folly possible under the historical conditions of the beginning of the twentieth century —, or that the protagonist's initiation into *Bildung*, meant to allow him to live life at its fullest, comes by means of disease and death. Death is present throughout the narrative, not least because the action takes place in a sanatorium filled with several terminally ill patients. Yet even

[26] T. J. Reed, *Thomas Mann: The Uses of Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), p. 226

this contributes to the above-mentioned renewal, as the dark circumstances of life are among the most significant experiences facing the individual in modern literature.[27] This modern individual, living in the span of time that included the First World War, gained a different view of the world. To Jung the war was both a cause and a consequence of that worldview, and that is why I will be resorting to some tenets of his analytic psychology to uncover that change: a look at the psychic mood of the time is potentially very significant when examining the *Bildungsroman*'s status as *Zeitroman*. Not only is Jung's analytic psychology useful here, but also his cultural criticism, as his perception of the overall situation of Europe seems to me to be most valid and helpful. Jung's status as an insightful critic of the culture of his time is often not made the most of, yet *Der Zauberberg*, as I hope to show, agrees with many of his views on the state of man and of the Western world at the beginning of the twentieth century.

If it is a *Bildungsroman*, *Der Zauberberg* must meet certain of the long-standing requirements of the genre, even if it is, as noted above, concerned with renewing some of them. Mann's novel appeared in the time of literary Modernism, and the novel's aspect of renewal is, to some extent, modernist. The cases of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, for instance, illustrate that, for all its innovation, some conceptions of the 'new' were to a certain extent rooted in the

[27] Just to clarify that by modern, I always refer to something related to the period of the beginning of the twentieth century, be it in a context related to literature, culture or the individual.

past, in tradition: here the Modernist only repudiates the most recent past; the remote past seems more authentic to her/him. [28]

Der Zauberberg is, at first sight, a naturalistic novel, and there is little doubt that its fabric owes much to realist views. However, as Gerald Gillespie points out, the novel's experimentations with the nature of time also involve the collapse of an all-out realist epistemology and of the structures of realist novels. The way in which *Der Zauberberg* handles non-concrete realities, that is, ones that are not subject to empirical verification, gives it a status of a new fictional construct, and a modernist one, at that: 'Mann's problematizing of the time order of fiction and of his own act of imaginative recollection thus touches core issues we find in such great modernist coping with time as Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-27) and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922).'[29]

The self's isolation from the pressures of society and from the pressures of time accentuates the hermetic tone of much modernist fiction. This separation, this exile, might be seen as another way to relate to society, of course, but as Peter Nicholls notes, it was seen as a necessary condition to making it new.[30] The presence in a different or altered time order thus allows inner, subjective time to gain unprecedented significance. In *Der Zauberberg*, the constant use of

[28] See Nicholls (1995), p. 166f.
[29] Gerald Gillespie, 'Educational Experiment in Thomas Mann', in Hardin (1991), p. 365. Gillespie takes the comparison of *Der Zauberberg* with *Ulysses* — the consummate modernist piece — a little further. As he considers the alchemical nuances and the engagement with scientific sources of Mann's novel, he sees in those characteristics a symmetry with Joyce's.
[30] Nicholls (1995), p. 13

leitmotifs and their influence on "objective" fictional time helps to create the relativity that is so characteristic of Modernism. As Minden notes, that truly was the spirit of the time, and *Der Zauberberg* thus becomes a literary experiment, an experiment in 'a world where the search for new forms is not a question of an artist's choice but a political and historical necessity'.[31] It is for all these reasons, Mann's novel is, in a way, also a good example of the 'new', and mainly, as will be seen, of the search for a new Humanism.

2.1. 'In the mountains, there you feel free': Hans Castorp's escape from modern society

> 'But I don't want to go among mad people,' Alice remarked.
> 'Oh, you can't help that,' said the Cat: 'we're all mad here. I'm mad, You're mad.'
> 'How do you know I'm mad?' said Alice.
> 'You must be,' said the Cat, 'or you wouldn't have come here.'
> Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*

Hans Castorp is the name of the protagonist of *Der Zauberberg*, and he shows some of the peculiar traits that make for a real *Bildungsheld*. He too shows a growing apprehension with the narrow future possibilities that await him in society. This apprehension does indeed grow, as it is not present from the beginning of the narrative. As the novel starts, the narrator provides no information to the reader that Hans is aware of that state of affairs; yet often the *Bildungsheld* does not know of qualities he has in his inmost self. They have to

[31] Minden, in Robertson (2002), p. 51

be revealed, and Hans too soon finds the reasons that contribute to his particular apprehension. The *Bildungsroman* is, after all, a process, a *Werdegang*.

At the beginning of the narrative, Hans only comes to the mountain as a visitor, a vacationer, with the objective of visiting his tubercular cousin Joachim Ziemssen, whilst taking advantage of that visit to rest from the studies in engineering he is undertaking in the flatlands. The narrator immediately — and ironically — underlines the protagonist's lack of critical insight into his own situation in life. He does it ironically because that particular "deficiency" is likely to be linked by the reader with Hans's status as *Bildungsheld*. But Hans clearly aims for a swift return to the familiar surroundings which he does not dare to put into question: 'Seine [Hans] Meinung vielmehr war gewesen, sie [die Reise] rasch abzutun, weil sie abgetan werden mußte, ganz als derselbe zurückzukehren, als der er abgefahren war, und sein Leben genau dort wieder aufzunehmen, wo er es für einen Augenblick hatte liegen lassen müssen.' (ZB, 12)

Nevertheless, the narrator also notes that Hans had not yet created solid roots in his life. Time and again the narrator insists on Hans as being nothing but an *einfacher junger Mensch*, a simple young man. Hans is only *mittelmässig*, perhaps even mediocre, but this is not best seen in purely negative terms, as the narrator's unfolding closeness with Hans's persona reveals. After all, as the narrative goes on, the narrator's reflections extend the protagonist's own experiences more and more.

Furthermore, Hans is also viewed as unique — albeit in his own way —as he is also life's problem child, *ein Sorgenkind des Lebens*. All things considered, irony in the novel also has to do with the status the reader decides to give to Hans, as the narrator surely offers no certainties. Perhaps Hans should just be viewed as being the norm — the *Mittelmaß* — for society, an average person, and not as an example of society's mediocrity.

Hans was only meant to stay in the mountain for three weeks, yet he ends up living a seven-year enchantment in the magic mountain: he is hermetically contained in that particular scenario. Mann, again, viewed *Der Zauberberg* as a hermetic novel and his own personal interest in myth only reinforces its associations with the Greek god of magic and alchemy Hermes Trismesgistus.[32] Everything points to the mountain as an enchanted realm, one that, as a former patient of the sanatorium said upon unwillingly returning to the flatlands, allows one to look beyond the shadows: 'Dazu muß man oben gelebt haben, um zu wissen, wie es sein muß. Hier unten fehlen die Grundbegriffe.' (ZB, 276) The principles of the magic mountain do indeed differ from what Hans was used to. It

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[32] For more on Mann's interest in and use of myth, see Frederick A. Lubich, '*The Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man*', in Robertson (2002). Hermes is the name the Greeks gave to the mythical Egyptian god Thoth. As a God-Being, he was given credit for inventing hieroglyphic writing. He was known as the 'Scribe of the Gods', and as such, was the recorder of all human deeds. It has also been said that the Great Thoth brought to mankind the sciences of law, astrology, anatomy, medicine, chemistry, art, magic, alchemy and architecture. The Greeks called Thoth 'Hermes Trismesgistus', meaning 'Thrice Great'. The exact reason for this title is not specifically known. For more on Hermes, see Antoine Faivre, *Eternal Hermes: From Greek God to Alchemical Magus*, trans. Jocelyn Godwin (Grand Rapids: Phanes, 2000).

is a realm of death and disease, and paradoxically it is referred to as the underworld, despite the fact that it is a mountain. The rarefied air of the mountain indeed heightens Hans's perceptions, and he starts viewing the life he had up until then led in the flatlands in an entirely different way. His solid bourgeois education at first prevents him from accepting the untroubled ways of life that he witnesses during his first days in the mountain, which can be seen in the repeated fact that he never ceases to point out the differences between himself and them 'up there' to his cousin.

In *Der Zauberberg*, the goal of *Bildung* is the shaping of the self beyond the *Mittelmaß* of the flatlands, so to speak, and Hans cannot fail to recognise that he himself was not at all free from society's conventions. Until he arrived in the mountain, he had not had the freedom, a prerequisite of the *Bildungsprozeß*, to make his own choices, subdued as he many times was by exterior demands, even in his own professional choices, as he confesses in a conversation with Hofrat Behrens, the sanatorium's chief physician:

> 'Warum sind sie denn Ingenieur geworden?'
> 'Aus Zufall. Das waren wohl mehr oder weniger die äußeren Umstände, die darin den Ausschlag gaben.' (ZB, 363)

Hans's whole life had consisted of a number of steps, mostly dictated from the exterior, directed towards future social and professional accommodation, and he never tried to justify that approach towards life until he arrived in the mountain.

By finding an occupation and joining the market place, to put it like that, Hans would have faced a question the individual has to put himself in the modern world, in that he would only have been worth the price that he could fetch there. His own true self would never have been recognised for its human, intrinsic value: 'Caught within the formidable pressures of time and the social world, the self is reduced to the status of what it can produce, accomplish, and achieve.' Hans would only be destined to become another productive element along the 'assembly lines of society', as Hans Meyerhoff puts it, and he would only be equal to what he was capable of *doing* rather then by what he truly *was*.[33] It is in the mountain, then, and in due time, that Hans comes to realise that 'contemporary society afforded no goals attractive to a thoughtful person'.[34] Modern society does not truly value the individual, only the individual's function; modern day culture, with its emphasis on the masses, extinguishes the individual. The very existence of the modern world depends on the mechanised application of the individual's function, or the function, even, that the individual becomes. Represented by a function, and identifying himself completely with it, the modern individual becomes little more than a mechanism.

This theme of changed economical and social conditions is widespread in modern literature. The progress brought about by technological development reduces human life to a succession of productive and instrumental parts,

[33] Hans Meyerhoff, *Time in Literature* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), p. 114f
[34] Henry Hatfield, *From the Magic Mountain: Mann's Later Masterpieces* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 43

seriously questioning man's status in the world. However, when discussing this problem, Meyerhoff says that relations like love, marriage or friendship and 'certain derivative concepts such as responsibility and loyalty, are predicated, rightly or wrongly, upon the assumption that human beings have intrinsic worth and that they are capable of entering into commitments which exhibit a sense of continuity, duration and identity'.[35]

Without directly relating to values such as these — the *Grundbegriffe* that are rarely seen in the flatlands —, Hans's path through life would lack purpose and worth, and he would not truly live, perhaps only exist. His life would have been wasted, because he would not have moved away from the conventions that are the true realities of the social world, the realities that smother the real life of the individual:

> Die Tatsache, daß die Konventionen immer in irgendeiner Art blühen, beweist, daß die erdrückende Mehrzahl der Menschen nicht den eigenen Weg, sondern die Konvention wählt und infolgedessen nicht sich selbst entwickelt, sondern eine Methode, und damit ein collectivum auf Kosten der eigenen Ganzheit.[36]

The individual self merges indistinguishably with society, surrendering its own wholeness into the wholeness of the group, and instead of the inner voice modern man only listens to the voice of the group.

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[35] Meyerhoff (1968), p. 117

[36] Carl Gustav Jung, 'Vom Werden der Persönlichkeit', in *Gesammelte Werke: Über die Entwicklung der Persönlichkeit*, ed. Lilly Jung-Merker and Elisabeth Rüf (Olten and Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1972), 17, 198

It is not surprising that Hans's disease, as is suggested throughout the narrative, turns out to be the physical expression of his spiritual inability to fit into the conventional bourgeois world of the flatlands. If Hans is indeed *mittelmässig*, then it can be assumed that such is the way in which the narrator views the middle-class ethos of the modern world, one that possesses a mechanistic, utilitarian view of reality. And Hans confesses his own ideas on the world of the flatlands to Settembrini:

> So sind die Leute. Wie ich hier so liege und es von weitem sehe, kommt es mir kraß vor. Was brauchten Sie für Ausdrücke, — phlegmatisch und? Und energisch! Gut, aber was heißt das? Das heißt hart, kalt. Und was heißt hart und kalt? Das heißt grausam. Es ist eine grausame Luft da unten, unerbittlich. (ZB, 275)

The world down below had shaped Hans, but upon his arrival at the mountain, he begins to liberate himself from that bourgeois work ethic and morality, from all the constrictive forces, something which reveals to him the narrow-mindedness of his previous specialised occupation. Gillespie even goes a step further, identifying these assumptions with Mann's own opinion: 'Now the novelist Mann transposes his own Nietzschean critique of the age's spiritual "palsy" and "mediocrity" openly onto the "middle class" world that has shaped Hans.'[37]

Social and economic problems may estrange man from his own surroundings, but the twentieth century saw the rise of a more psychologically

[37] Gillespie, in Hardin (1991), p. 367

conditioned individual, whose inner factors end up alienating her/him more from society than any other factors.[38] Again, for the *Bildungsideal* to be achieved, the protagonist has to develop away from society, so that he does not estrange himself from it even more. The *Bildungsheld*, with his inwardness and drive to self-awareness, does exactly that. The outer world has often little to give to him, only he himself can both give and find, so Hans too, in the same way, must stray very far away from that world. Jung says that separation is the only way in which the individual can become a modern man in another sense of the term, that is, as one who recognises the limitations of the practical world. This modern man is one who grows unhindered, being unhistorical in the deepest sense of the word, estranged from the masses of people that live entirely within the bounds of tradition and convention.

This modern man is alone, and leaves behind him the comfort of what he was before. And that solitude is all the better for him, as Jung points out: 'Daher ist jeder Einzelne, wenn er in der Sozietät ist, unbewußt ein schlechterer Mensch in gewissem Sinne, als wenn er für sich allein handelt; denn er ist von der Sozietät getragen und in dem Maße seiner individuellen Verantwortlichkeit enthoben.'[39] If the individual is mechanised by society, then this environment has

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[38] See David H. Miles, 'The Picaro's Journey into the Confessional: The Changing Image of the Hero in the German Bildungsroman', in *PMLA*, vol. 89 (1974), 989.
[39] Jung, 'Nachwort zu "Aufsätze zur Zeitgeschichte"', in *Zivilisation im Übergang*, ed. Lilly Jung-Merker and Elisabeth Rüf (Olten and Freiburg am Breisgau: Walter, 1974), 10, 256

nothing to offer him. He must bear the responsibility of giving something to himself.

2.2. *Der Zauberberg* as *Zeitroman* and Hans between God and the Devil

> Der Mensch ist keine feste und dauernde Gestaltung... er ist vielmehr ein Versuch und Übergang, er ist nichts anderes als die schmale, gefährliche Brücke zwischen Natur und Geist.
>
> Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf*

The *Bildungsroman* may be more concerned with the problems of the individual as such than with the problems of society, but that does not mean that this type of novel is completely divorced from the outside; quite on the contrary, actually, because, however symbolically, this is a genre that frequently reflects and concerns itself with the actual problems of its age. The protagonist is frequently a symbol of his time, as the narrator of *Der Zauberberg*, referring to Hans, admits: 'Der Mensch lebt nicht nur sein persönliches Leben als Einzelwesen, sondern, bewußt oder unbewußt, auch das seiner Epoche und Zeitgenossenschaft.' (ZB, 49)

The atmosphere of the mountain, as mentioned before, is different from that of the flatlands. Everything is as if heightened through its rarefied air, both the good and the bad, so many critics refer to the magic mountain as being a sphere of confusion:

> If it were possible to sum up the relation between the Flatland and the Magic Mountain in terms of simple contrast, the former would stand for health, order, energy, activity, for 'seriousness' and 'honour', the sphere in which alone 'one can further development and utilise time'. The latter could be defined as disorder, darkness, confusion, the romantic sphere of infinity, where the critical faculty is lulled and commitments are forgotten. This would be true and false at the same time.[40]

R. Hinton Thomas recognises the futility of trying to define *Der Zauberberg* in terms of simple antinomies, as the narrative progresses like a game of opposites that refutes definiteness. The two worlds are certainly different, some attributes of the magic mountain are lacking in the flatlands, yet the opposite is also true. There is, in point of fact, no such thing as 'simple contrast' in this novel.

Given the multitude of nationalities of its patients, the sanatorium in Davos mirrors in many ways the societies they come from, thus becoming somehow a reflection of the world of the flatlands and of many of its pre-war issues. This aspect of *Der Zauberberg* as *Zeitroman* — here seen as historical time — being a part of a larger totality, is none the less important, for it shows, to stay true to the medical terminology of the novel, the x-ray of an age. If the close relation of the *Bildungsroman* genre to its life and times is taken into consideration, then *Der Zauberberg* must also be read along these lines: 'So kann man den Roman zweifellos auch lesen, als "Chronik der zum Untergang

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[40] R. Hinton Thomas, *Thomas Mann: The Mediation of Art*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), p. 99

verurteilten Vorkriegswelt", denkbar nur, um Thomas Mann nochmal zu zitieren, "bei einer noch intakten kapitalistischen Wirtschaftsform".'[41]

Der Zauberberg is deeply concerned with the European soul, and the sanatorium, with its carefree patients who represent different ways of looking at that same soul, is indeed home to an illness that mirrors the disease of pre-war society. The above-mentioned concern is many times shown symbolically — sometimes even all too metaphysically —, rather than in a straightforward, pragmatic way. The crisis in Europe was, above all, a problem of the Western man's spirit.

Jung too thought that the overall European mood that culminated in the First World war was a symptom of a psychic pandemic:

> Die Erschütterung unserer Welt und die Erschütterung unseres Bewußtseins sind eins und dasselbe. Alles wird relativ und daher fragwürdig. Dieweil das Bewußtsein zögernd und zweifelhaft diese fragwürdige Welt betrachtet, wo es von Friedens- und Freundschaftsverträgen, von Demokratie und Diktatur, von Kapitalismus und Bolschewismus dröhnt, erhebt sich die Sehnsucht der Seele nach einer Antwort auf das Getümmel von Zweifel und Unsicherheiten.[42]

Jung wrote these words in 1928, but with the catastrophe of 1914-1918 in mind. He thought the situation of Europe had remained unchanged since the beginning

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[41] Stefan Bodo Würfell, 'Zeitkrankheit-Zeitdiagnose aus der Sicht des *Zauberbergs*. Die Vorgeschichte des Ersten Weltkrieges — in Davos erlebt', in *Thomas Mann Studien: Das "Zauberberg"-Symposium 1994 in Davos*, ed. Thomas Sprecher (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995), 11, 208f

[42] Jung, 'Das Seelenproblem des modernen Menschen' (1974), 10, 104

of the century. When referring to the circumstances that had led to the First World War, he feared they were very present in the world, and warned (rightly) of the danger of an even greater chaos: 'Ja, zehn Jahre nach dem Krieg sehen wir wieder [...] dieselben Phrasen und Schlagworte am Werk, welche auf lange Sicht weitere Katastrophen unabwendbar vorbereiten.'[43] The symptoms of the mental change that started taking place in Europe before the First World War had by no means come to an end.

For Jung, man had lost all faith in social and political forces and the measures these took to improve his condition. The dark stirrings of the modern individual's own unconscious side of the psyche were seen in the structures of the world, and the danger was, as Jung acknowledged, obvious. Given the influence of psychology on the whole of the twentieth century, the flow of psychic forces into the outer world became a feature of much modern thought, and unless the individual clarified her/his own self, that flow to the exterior could never run well. Material progress without self-awareness is seen as useless, and, in the pre-war period, this only increased the prospect of a catastrophe.

Jung considered that no such progress had been achieved, not even after the calamity of the First World War. The psyche of man seemed to be covered with barbed wire, just as the fields of war were all over Europe. Man, too, was

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[43] Ibid., p. 94. For more on Jung's stance on this subject, see 'Die Bedeutung der Psychologie für die Gegenwart', in *Zivilisation im Übergang*.

hiding in his own inner trenches. Only with increasing insight, as the source of problems is within, could that state of things in the world be fought. It is necessary to know first the unconscious, the archetypal darkness within the psyche, in Jung's terminology, the shadow. Jung warned about the fact that man tried to ignore this shadow, which contributed to the precariousness of his spiritual situation, as he was only blinding himself to the merciless truth about his own nature.[44] If the unconscious shadow eludes consciousness, it must nevertheless be acknowledged, or the world will feel its effects. For Jung, if an inner situation is not made conscious, it happens outside, a kind of psychic transference which he appropriately dubs 'fate'. If the individual does not address his inner contradictions, the world must perforce act out the conflict and be torn into opposite halves (consequently, the war is seen as a problem that starts within, a problem of man's spirit).

Hans's "dilemma" will show exactly that, as this is also the way in which *Der Zauberberg* looks at the problems of the world, as the characters of the novel show a condition, physical and psychological, that can be related to the exterior. If the *Bildungsroman* frequently paid more attention to universal problems than to specific problems open to realistic treatment, to put it this way, the concrete social picture depicted in Davos is representative of the near-imploding society of the pre-war period, with all its faults and vices, and there are plenty of actual, historical allusions throughout the course of the narrative, many arising from the

[44] See Jung, 'Das Seelenproblem des modernen Menschen' (1974), 10, 106f.

endless debate between the Italian pedagogue Lodovico Settembrini and the Jesuit Leo Naphta.[45] Mostly, these allusions relate to situations of political and social upheaval in different countries, and even the First World War is somehow "predicted" by both Settembrini and Naphta. All this helps, of course, to create a shared social text for the reader, the characters and the narrator, and it must have been that much clearer to the reader of the time.

Hans, more specifically, is *mittelmässig*; median, he stands for Germany, the land in the middle. If all characters are somehow imbued with symbolic value, so is Hans, as a young German. Joachim, for example, stands for form and duty; the Russian Clawdia Chauchat, the "Circe" who bewitches Hans, for lust and abandonment. As the protagonist of such a German fictional form as the *Bildungsroman*, Hans represents the German spirit positioned, in the framework of the novel, between West and East, between the West's 'ethos of martial discipline and order' and the East's withdrawal to 'excesses that obliterate all claims of practical social living'.[46]

So, both politically and philosophically, Hans is a symbol of Germany, *das Land der Mitte*, and it is no coincidence that Settembrini wants to divert him

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[45] That is the case, just to give an example of those historical allusions, of the political tension in Portugal that was to culminate in the regicide: 'Auch mit Personen, die an der Spitze der Großloge der letztgenannten [portugiesischen] Monarchie standen, wollte er [Settembrini] briefliche Fühlung unterhalten. Dort reiften zweifellos die Dinge der Entscheidung entgegen. Hans Castorp möge an ihn denken, wenn in allernächster Zeit da unten die Ereignisse sich überstützen würden.' (ZB, 709)

[46] Martin Swales, 'The Story and the Hero: A Study of Thomas Mann's "Der Zauberberg"', in *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 46 (1972), 362

from the seductive influence of Clawdia and from what he perceives as the Eastern ideas of Naphta. The Italian pedagogue does let Hans know what the future holds both for him and for his country:

> 'Caro!', sagte Herr Settembrini. 'Caro amico! Entscheidungen werden zu treffen sein, — Entscheidungen von unüberschätzbarer Tragweite für das Glück und die Zukunft Europas, und Ihrem Lande werden sie zufallen, in seiner Seele werden sie sich zu vollziehen haben. Zwischen Ost und West gestellt, wird es wählen müssen, wird es endgültig und mit Bewußtsein zwischen den beiden Sphären, die um sein Wesen werben, sich entscheiden müssen. Sie sind jung, Sie werden an dieser Entscheidung beteiligt sein, sind berufen, sie zu beeinflussen. (ZB, 707f)

Hans, like Germany, was vulnerable to the pernicious effects of Eastern thinking. Following this train of thought, it can be said that it was more than Hans's own process of self-cultivation that could be put at risk, in what echoes Jung's opinion: 'Der Widersacher ist ein Wind, der aus Asiens Unendlichkeit und Anfänglichkeit, in breiter Front von Thrazien bis Germanien, nach Europa hineinbläst, bald von außen Völker zusammenweht wie dürre Blätter, bald von innen welterschütternde Gedanken inspiriert.'[47]

Jung's reference has obviously a much larger scope that Hans's own persona, yet it warns not only of the actual danger posed by the East, but also of psychological factors that remain out of sight. Hans has for a while been aware of the situation he is in, however symbolically or metaphorically, as he recalls a boat ride he had in Holstein, with clear skies in the West and misty ones in the

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[47] Jung, 'Wotan' (1974), 10, 211

East. He immediately compares this memory with his own situation between Settembrini and Clawdia: 'War es ihm wieder, als säße er im Kahn auf jenem holsteinischen See und blicke aus der glasigen Tageshelle des westlichen Ufers vexierten und geblendeten Auges hinüber in die nebeldurchsponnene Mondnacht der östlichen Himmel.' (ZB, 223f)

If one accepts Settembrini's and Jung's vision on the ultimate fall of Germany to the nebulous East, the case of Hans is none the less different. His fondness for Settembrini stands for the corrective influence and for the balancing effect of humanist ways of viewing the world, so Hans's past contact with death eventually grows into a positive quality. There is evidence in the text that the Italian's one-sided rational Humanism is wrong to shun the darkness of life, but to give too much importance to death as to make true life impossible is also wrong. Living in contradictions, balancing contraries — as they live within — in utter freedom will be the true *Bildung* of Hans Castorp. If only Europe could rise from the ruins of the First World War in the same way: 'Undoktrinär, unrechthaberisch und ohne Glauben and Worte und Antithesen, frei, heiter und sanft möge es sein, dieses Europa.'[48]

Der Zauberberg does indeed live mostly from its characters. Their existence depicts tendencies that are paradigmatic of the Europe of the time, but, more than that, they represent dispositions that are a-historical, in the sense that

[48] Mann (1960), 'Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen', 12, 488

they are timeless. And that specific characteristic proves to be of decisive importance at several stages of the narrative. The characters represent much more than their historically defined selves — or indeed their space, origin, and setting —, because they represent types. Mann customarily attempts the merging of the individual and the typical, of the particular and the general, by seeing the characters as something more than their own selves. And in *Der Zauberberg*, the characters have been seen in a variety of different ways, as representing whole countries, ideologies, even archetypal tendencies.

'Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichniß' — 'everything transient is just a parable' — is the closing verse of Goethe's *Faust*, and the idea which that verse expresses is what makes a symbolic novel out of *Der Zauberberg*.[49] If everything is a parable, it can even be argued that the ancestry of some of the novel's characters in the novel belong almost to the time of myth, far before historical time, because the story the narrator is telling is much older than its years, according to the narrator's own assumptions, as will be seen later. The characters and the relations that are established between them and Hans Castorp strongly contribute to Hans's growth. Through them he is subjected to a multitude of intellectual and emotional experiences. His social persona is broken up by this interaction, but his self, which leads to his affirmation as an individual, to his *Bildung*, is unveiled by it.

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[49] Goethe, *Faust*, in *Sämtliche Werke nach Epoche seines Schaffens: Letzte Jahre: 1827-1832*, ed. Gisela Henckmann et al. (Munich: Hanser, 1997), 18.1, 351

Hans's first influence, as was mentioned before, is Settembrini. In the beginning, when Hans's eyes are not yet open to the narrowness of his occupations in the flatlands, he nevertheless displays certain "talents" inside him that make him likely to open those eyes. That inner gold does not escape the attention of the Italian Humanist, who recognises the *bildendes Potential* inside the young man and reserves himself the right to become Hans's self-appointed mentor, as it were:

> Im übrigen sei in der Seele eines jungen Menschen sozusagen mit sympathtischer Tinte alles schon eingeschrieben, 'und Sache des Erziehers ist es, das Rechte entschieden zu entwickeln, das Falsche aber, das hervortreten will, durch sachgemäße Einwirkung auf immer auszulöschen'.[50]

Hans is submitted to a variety of intellectual influences during the course of the narrative, but Settembrini will remain, in the end, his true mentor, as Hans declares his fondness for the Italian organ-grinder. The humanism he prescribes for Hans, as it were, needs renewal in its partiality, as it becomes a victim of its own limitations and implicit contradictions, but its corrective influence gains merit for Hans as the narrative goes on.

Settembrini may be too focused on the pragmatic aspect of existence, but his conception of humanism is none the less vital for the formal aspect of Hans's effort of self-cultivation. And like Hans, Settembrini too rebels against the forces

[50] Helmut Koopmann, 'Die Lehren des *Zauberbergs*', in Sprecher (1995), 11, 60

that attempt to cripple man's existence, thus assuring man's dignity and right to clarify his own self and, moreover, to cultivate it.

Eliot, a contemporary of Mann's, said that his interpretation of Humanism was that it stood for 'breadth, tolerance, equilibrium and sanity'.[51] Its aim was not to provide dogma, but to be a mediating and corrective force. Likewise, this is Settembrini's greatest contribution to Hans's *Bildungsprozeß*, and it is something which helps Hans during his *placet experiri*. Hans allows Settembrini to supervise his own mental operations, not with the intention of being converted to the Italian's humanist doctrine, but rather as a means to prevent dogmatism and sterile speculation. In his turn, Settembrini's aim is to protect Hans from the dangers of the magic mountain, as he recognises some of the hidden "talents" of Hans's self, just as Behrens had recognised Hans's particular "talent" for sickness.

To Settembrini, Hans was in danger because the magic mountain confronted him with all the values he carried within his inner self, but in an extreme and heightened form. The experiences he had in the sanatorium were somehow already inside him. The liaison he establishes with Clawdia, for example, was already in him in the form of his boyhood infatuation with

[51] Eliot (1958), 'Second Thoughts about Humanism', p. 488

Přibislav Hippe.[52] But what Hans has inside does not exist only in the form of recollections of previous events of his life.

Settembrini's influence allows Hans to engage in advantageous intellectual exercise by providing guidance and insight. This intellectual aspect is of the utmost importance in *Der Zauberberg*, and more so if one recalls the legacy the novel inherited from former *Bildungsromane*, many of them novels of ideas: ideas contribute to Hans's spiritual emancipation, especially the tension between the antagonistic world views that arises from Settembrini's and Naphta's controversies, the former with his gospel of reason and the latter with his Irrationalism and religious obscurantism. And it is true that one archetype — if one sees the characters in that way — always has its contrary. The ongoing dispute between these two characters is a battle between West and East, reason and faith, intellect and feeling, and both Settembrini and Naphta seem to be fighting for Hans's soul. After all, and at first, the Italian Humanist tries to prevent Hans's contact with the Jesuit, but Hans ends up overcoming the ideas of both of them.

Settembrini's ideal of education for Hans is one that aims at enabling Hans to adapt to exterior reality, but cares little or nothing for the hidden powers — the shadow — of the psyche. As for Naphta, he stands for the very opposite. The Jesuit is a complex figure, as, in spite, or perhaps because, of his religious

[52] See Swales, 46 (1972), 369.

status, he represents romantic *Dämonie*. For Naphta, true life has nothing to do with reason, and he stands as the ultimate enemy of the philistine bourgeois world of Settembrini. More than this, he despises and condemns the Italian's concept of humanity, of *schöne Humanität*. Hans transcends the limited and limiting views of his mentors, as their discussions progressively deteriorate into chaos and hollowness. At a certain stage, Hans is forced to ponder exactly on that: 'Niemand mehr wußte, wer eigentlich der Fromme und wer der Freie war.' (ZB, 638) Hans surpasses Settembrini and Naphta, then, as they play God and the Devil fighting for his soul, by reserving to himself the right to think and speak unhindered, as Settembrini, in fact, had always encouraged him to do. The Italian, however, had advised Hans not to use irony but as a rhetorical means, yet Hans employs his own ironic detachment — much as the narrator does — to escape intellectual dogma and turmoil.

Hans summons the same tool or, rather, the same weapon — the word —, as his two "preceptors" with growing vigour as the narrative progresses, in what is a clear sign of his gradual intellectual evolution and emancipation: 'Neuerdings verwirrte und verhaspelte Hans Castorp sich nicht mehr bei solchen Expektorationen und blieb nicht stecken. Er sprach seinen Part zu Ende, ließ die Stimme sinken, machte Punktum und ging seines Weges wie ein Mann.' (ZB, 802)

Nevertheless, and if one still harbours any doubts about Hans's ultimate inclination for one of his two mentors, one only needs to look at what happens during the psychic session near the end of the narrative, when Hans repeats Settembrini's gesture of turning on the light, in what represents a great step away from death and towards reverence for life. Even with Hans's early attraction to Naphta's ideas, and despite Naphta's superior rhetoric during many of the discussions with Settembrini, Hans moves, albeit slowly, from passivity into action, from *Unform* into form.

Equally, one needs to look no further than at Naphta's nihilistic death: Naphta, after all, viewed death as a mark of nobility, as much as the second son of *Tous-les-deux*, whose behaviour, it must be kept in mind, so much disgusted Hans during his brief contact with the dying boy. Naphta's death, being nihilistic, epitomises his own nihilistic dialectics. His debate with Settembrini is cut short, but its importance, as Gillespie mentions, is overall of great importance to Hans, as Hans becomes familiar with the history of European thought by witnessing 'the ongoing great debate between Settembrini and Naphta, and transcends both of these cardinal figures by achieving his own synthesis'.[53] Hans finds a golden mean between the arid dualism of his preceptors: 'Während ihm doch schien, als ob irgendwo inmitten zwischen den strittigen Unleidlichkeiten, zwischen rednerischem Humanismus und analphabetischer Barbarei das gelegen sein

[53] Gillespie, in Hardin (1991), p. 374f

müsse, was man als das Menschliche oder Humane persönlich ansprechen durfte.' (ZB, 716)

According to Swales, the magic mountain is a place that makes the intellectual more purely intellectual, and when Hans chooses to stay in Davos instead of returning to the flatlands, the negative side of his intellectual existence shows itself in terms of its inaction.[54] But the speculative effort on Hans's part is all the more valuable if considered in terms of his *Bildungsprozeß*, and it is representative, in its positive aspect, of the German intellectual tradition. As Clawdia says to Hans, the German is not content to live for the sake of living, and Hermann J. Weigand rightly points out that 'he wants to get something out of life, even though that something is an intangible spiritual value. [...] This is his morality, the morality of striving, as expressed in the ethical idealism of Kant, of Fichte, and of Nietzsche'.[55] Through speculation, Hans is allowed to understand more both about himself and about man, more than he could ever have dreamed of doing in the flatlands. He has several kinds of experiences, medical and emotional, to name but two, in the mountain, but his intellectual efforts constitute the main part of the narrative and thus distinguish themselves. After all, this is the *Aufklärung*'s tradition of exercising one's reason that helped to shape the *Bildungsroman* genre.

[54] See Swales (1978), p. 108.
[55] Hermann J. Weigand, *The Magic Mountain: A Study of Thomas Mann's Novel Der Zauberberg*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), p. 136

Weigand further "makes use" of Hans to make a constructive analogy between Hans and the German mind. In doing so, he considers that Hans is more inclined 'to the theoretical as contrasted with the practical sphere. He has an enormous respect for work, but he feels more at home in contemplation'.[56] The predominance of the intellectual is, again, a characteristic of the *Bildungsroman*, and is related to the genre's proximity with the concept of *Geist*, the advantage point from which the narrowness of the practical world can be overcome. Philosophising, as it were, is important to Hans because it allows him to extract from his self what was already there. As in natural sciences, there are rules by which nature operates, they just need to be discovered and made intelligible. The whole alchemical notion of *Der Zauberberg* rests on the extraction of the "gold" which is buried in the depths of Hans's self. The hermetic character of the magic mountain permits the appearance of those inner qualities, in the line of the Goethean understanding of transformation and development through the intensification and *Steigerung* of inherent qualities.[57]

To the alchemical view of things, if there is to be a heightening, then there must be some inner substance that contributes to the alchemical process, as nothing can come from nothing. Hans too has *Urerlebnisse*, that is, psychic structures that are rooted at the very heart of personality. Only these structures permit the rise of the *Bildungserlebnisse*, here meaning structures of a more

[56] Ibid., p. 126
[57] See Thomas (1963), p. 107.

intellectual kind.[58] Goethe called the latter *Urphänomene*, archetypes, and it is their interaction with Hans's intellectual operations which contributes to the alchemical process, to the *Bildungsprozeß*, in this case.[59]

To be removed from his *Mittelmässigkeit*, Hans must be initiated into a higher truth, so to speak, he too must be elevated. He learns the alchemical process from Naphta, who calls it a magical pedagogy; in his turn, Hans dubs it hermetic pedagogy. Influenced by his mentors, Hans's own intellectual operations allow the emergence of his inner qualities, of his inner gold. It is exactly this that he explains to Clawdia, whilst talking about himself:

> Mit einem Worte, du weißt wohl nicht, daß es etwas wie die alchimistisch-hermetische Pädagogik gibt, Transsubstantiation, und zwar zum Höheren, Steigerung also, wenn du mich recht verstehen willst. Aber natürlich, ein Stoff, der dazu taugen soll, durch äußere Einwirkungen zum Höheren hinaufgetrieben und –gezwängt zu werden, der muß es wohl im voraus ein bißchen in sich haben. (ZB, 819)

Hans's self is divided into a variety of different and frequently even conflicting viewpoints. On the one hand, for example, Hans has a fascination with death; on the other, an absolute reverence for life. In the end, he finds a golden mean between these and other contraries, a middle path that lets him unite them. The goal of alchemy is not to separate natures, it is rather to unite them, as Jung, who wrote extensively about alchemy, says:

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[58] See Weigand (1964), p. 25.
[59] As Goethe told Eckermann on the 21st of December 1831. See Goethe (1989), 19, 457f.

> PARACELSUS, wie alle philosophischen Alchemisten, suchte das, was eine Griff hat an der dunkeln, körpergebundenen Natur des Menschen, an jener Seele, die ungreifbar in ihrer Welt- und Stoffverwobenheit, in fremdartigen, dämonischen Gestalten sich selber schreckhaft erschien [...]. Die Kirche konnte zwar exorzisieren und Dämonen bannen; aber sie entfernte dadurch den Menschen auch von seiner eigenen Natur.[60]

The contradictions within, the attraction to the dark forces of life that he shows is what Hans Castorp ethically learns to dominate. Again, as the narrator says, he might be *mittelmässig*, not made to be more than what he is, yet he also is that *Mittelmaß*, the middle measure where all potentialities are present, to take on another possible sense of the word.

None of Hans's acquaintances in the magic mountain can stand for the sum total of man's being. Only Hans has an insight, however blurred by circumstances, into the complete complexities of life, and of man's position as their master, as master of antinomies. If there is an essence in *Der Zauberberg*, Hans's realisation of this fact, which he has in his dream in the snow, might be it, it might be what Swales dubs the so-called 'value-centre' of the novel.[61] This critic speaks sceptically of this meaning-making notion, as have others. It might in fact be hard to speak about centres of meaning or of value in novels, such claims may be hard to sustain, but the view of the dream as being a kind of culmination of Hans's *Bildungsprozeß* is sustained by the very fabric of the

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[60] Jung, 'Paracelsus als geistige Erscheinung', in *Studien über alchemistische Vorstellungen*, ed. Lilly Jung-Merker and Elisabeth Rüf (Olten and Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1978), 13, 180. Jung believed that alchemy and Christianity were two aspects of the same human ambition, that is, the transformation and development of consciousness. But they became two shadow brothers, so to speak, incapable of coexisting together, although they shared the same goal. I will return to Jung's views on Christianity later.
[61] Swales, 46 (1972), 360f

novel, as the idea expressed in the dream is repeated by the narrator in the last few sentences of the novel. One could question if the narrator is doing it ironically, as he does so often does throughout the novel, as if to state that what is being said, i.e. that love is the greatest force against war and death, is actually a quite simple proposition, which perhaps does not need all the intellectual rambling of the novel. There may be some irony there, but it is my belief that the idea behind that irony is earnest enough.

Reader-response criticism says that a piece of literature is only completed when it is responded and received by the reader. I tend to share this view, and think that readers have choices when it comes to the attainment of meaning in texts, but I do not believe in a kind of subjective criticism that sees a text as meaning whatever the reader makes it out to mean. The reader is an agent who is only free within certain textual limits to make interpretative choices, and it is for these reasons that I believe that there is at least some kind of point being made in *Der Zauberberg*, and this will now be examined in more detail.

And as for Hans Castorp, making good on the Nietzschean premise of surpassing his own mentors, he becomes aware of life as a game of opposites. That awareness does not send him into despair, it rather allows him to truly see, because, by not committing to any of those opposites, he can view all of them critically. His rejection of traditional values, of dogma, and also of chaos, gives him a new understanding of reality. In the terms Schiller used, when referring to

Wilhelm Meister, Hans achieves definiteness, in terms of his attitude towards life, but, like Wilhelm, he in fact never loses openness to redefinition, as Mann confirmed in a letter to a group of students of an American high school in 1939, describing how Hans would be if he were to survive the war: 'Vielleicht, ja sicher ist er ernster geworden, sicherer, gelassener, aber immer noch wird er der Lernende geblieben sein, der achtungsvoll und freudig Lauschende, prüfend, verwerfend, wählend, niemandes Knecht, er selbst und aller guten Freund.'[62]

2.3. The dance of death, or a Jungian reading of *Der Zauberberg*

> I'm a desperate man — but too much of your life will be lost, its meaning lost, unless you approach it as much through love as through hate. So I approach it through division. So I denounce and I defend and I hate and I love.
>
> Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

A fascination with death and with the darkness that is ever-present in the world is perhaps the most significant aspect of Hans Castorp's early attitude towards life. This *Sympathie mit dem Tode* and the linking of beauty and death bears many traits of a *fin-de-siècle* outlook on life, but the overcoming of this viewpoint is of great significance for the whole of the narrative.

Death had played a significant role in Hans's life since a very early age, his being a child when he was orphaned. Hans was then educated by his grandfather, the consul Hans Lorenz Castorp, but Hans's grandfather only

[62] Mann (1960), 'Die Schule des Zauberbergs', 11, 601

outlived his own son and daughter-in-law for a few years. The experience of death in the family, as it were, comes through means of disease, since indications that Hans is ill and has been ill for a long time abound in the early stages of the narrative. Both his father and his grandfather — and Hans shares many of the latter's physiological, physiognomic, psychological and even spiritual characteristics — died of an inflammation of the lungs. And even though Hans's mother did not die of lung problems, but of cardiac arrest, Joachim is her half-sister's son. So it is at least probable that her family was predisposed to illness as well. Apparently, Hans's flushed face in the beginning of the novel is a sign of his illness, as even Behrens, who is not untainted by the disease he fights, is always blotched and red-faced.[63]

Hans's grandfather does play a pivotal role in his grandson's outlook on life. The baptismal bowl he shows to the young Hans fascinates the young child. It represents a succession of generations, providing Hans with an identification with the past of his own family, which gives him a certain sense of continuity. When the consul succumbs to his pulmonary condition, all the names that are inscribed in the baptismal bowl are of people who have passed away, with the exception of Hans's. He is the last link between the successive generations, but the baptismal bowl also works as a reminder of death, as Hans learns from a

[63] The text has several instances where doctors and patients are in fact brought together: 'Kameradschaft des Arztes mit dem Patienten ist gewiß zu begrüßen, und es läßt sich hören, daß nur der Leidende des Leidenden Führer und Heiland zu sein vermag.' (ZB, 185)

young age that he too will die, as did all his ancestors whose names are inscribed in the bowl.

Hans's recollections of his grandfather's funeral provide him with two different visions of death. On the one hand, he becomes aware of its noble and dignified aspect, of the ceremonial and respectful conduct it brings about in people; and furthermore, the grandfather who was put to rest in his coffin represented for his grandson the true image of the old Hans Lorenz Castorp. On the other hand, Hans also becomes aware of the purely physical and less appealing side of death, to put it like this, one that leads to the decay and the corruption of the body:

> Es hatte mit dem Tode eine fromme, sinnige und traurig schöne, das heißt geistliche Bewandtnis und zugleich eine ganz andere, geradezu gegenteilige, sehr körperliche, sehr materielle, die man weder als schön, noch als sinnig, noch als fromm, noch auch nur als traurig eigentlich ansprechen konnte. (ZB, 43)

The narrator stresses the almost indecent, low and fleshly character of death, but, again, that is only one of the ways in which young Hans sees the death of his grandfather. So in terms of death experiences, Hans is not at all mediocre. His family has a history of tuberculosis that the first x-ray he has in the sanatorium reveals also exists in him. In this sense, death truly is one of Hans's *Urerlebnisse*.

All these events give Hans a sense, from an early age, that death is intrinsically connected to life. As the medieval German saying goes, as soon as a

man is born, he is old enough to die. Death is seen as an integral and inalienable element in the experience of life, as the hour of birth is, after all, also the hour where death begins: organically, immanent death is born with life. Its dignified outlook, none the less, lets Hans see that death is not only *Unform*, rather it is death that gives life its very form: 'Unter den strukturellen Bedingungen des *Zauberbergs* wird *Form* aufgebrochen, damit ihr wahres Wesen in der ihm alleingültigen Gestalt der "Unform" zur Darstellung gebracht werden kann.'[64]

Existentialists, for instance, speak of the movement of time, of life, as being towards death, and that only man, among all living creatures, has a foreknowledge of his own death. If this idea is viewed in a negative way, the individual is likely to fall into the despairing, yes, but also sometimes alluring — as it is for Hans — entropy of death. This is Settembrini's greatest fear, and the Humanist soon attempts to release Hans from this fascination. As Theodore Ziolkowski says, in the end, all 'the great humanist movements with their orientation towards man in this world—Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, and classicism—regard death as existing only in order to make life possible'.[65] Ziolkowski further considers that this attitude culminates in the humanism of Goethe — who is, after all, one of Mann's greatest influences —, and traces its opposites to mystical movements like the Baroque and

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[64] Børge Kristiansen, *Thomas Manns Zauberberg und Schopenhauers Metaphysik*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Bouvier, 1986), p. 248

[65] Theodore Ziolkowski, *Dimensions of the Modern Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 217

Romanticism, for which life existed only to 'enrich eternal death', to use Ziolkowski's own words. Settembrini and Naphta are the most obvious examples of these two ways of viewing life in *Der Zauberberg*. And if one once again recalls the Goethean view, it identified Romanticism-*Unform* with disease and Classicism-*Form* with health (see chapter II, note 22).

The narrator of *Der Zauberberg* hints at this idea, yet more than that, the narrative thrust is directed towards finding a balance between these views, as true knowledge in and of life is only possible if man recognises, knows and accepts death. Solely in this way could death ultimately be an experience of life, and not only its mere opposite, its adversary. And Hans's wavering between life and death, furthermore, can quite clearly be analysed in the light of Jung's dichotomy of light and shadow: Hans is and remains the mid-point.

In the medical researches he carried out before having his dream in the snow, Hans had already linked life and death, yet he did so in completely different terms. Whilst talking to Behrens, Hans learns that the life process is completely identical with the dying one, as both are caused by means of oxidation:

> 'Fäulnis, Verwesung', sagte Hans Castorp, 'das ist doch Verbrennung, Verbindung mit Sauerstoff, soviel ich weiß.'
> 'Auffallend richtig. Oxydation.'
> 'Und Leben?'
> 'Auch. Auch, Jüngling. Auch Oxydation. [...] Tja, Leben ist Sterben, da gibt es nicht viel zu beschönigen, — une destruction organique, wie

> irgendein Franzos es in seiner angeborigen Leichtfertigkeit mal genannt hat.' (ZB, 368)

What distinguishes life and death, the one thing that does so, is that in life the organic form is conserved and constantly renews itself.

So form is, in a way, the keeper of life — that is the view of humanity, as Behrens calls it —, and it must be balanced with the idea of death. The medical idea thus merges with the humanist idea, and Humanism is revitalised by a greater knowledge of disease and death. This is what Hans understands more clearly, paradoxical as that may sound, in the realm of the unconscious, in his dream in the snow, considered by Mann to be the crux of the novel. Turning back to the most subjective part of himself, Hans glimpses a truth that should guide man's life, in the behaviour of the Sun-people in a kind of *Schlaraffenland*. Hans dreams of a people who have reverence for life and live it with decorum, adopting the right demeanour, and this despite their knowledge of the dark presence of death in the world; and to be able to live like this is simultaneously man's burden and grandeur.

The unconscious is the source of man's being, and the world of dreams is, according to Jung, nothing but an expression of man's *Innerste*, an inner world that is the property of all men and women, the collective unconscious, as Hans too seems to know: 'Man träumt nicht nur aus eigener Seele, möcht' ich sagen, man träumt anonym und gemeinsam, wenn auch auf eigene Art. Die große Seele,

von der du nur ein Teilchen, träumt wohl mal durch dich, auf deine Art, von Dingen, die sie heimlich immer träumt.' (ZB, 677) The fact that Hans's vision takes place in an Arcadian setting, moreover, unravels one of the great influences of the narrative, it opens the doors to the magic mountain, and, more broadly, to Mann's thought: his ideas, like Jung's, owe much to the archetypal principle behind Nietzsche's conception of the dichotomy between Apolline and Dionysiac forces.[66]

Nietzsche recognised that there was a dark undercurrent beneath the serene and pleasant world of classical Greece, as Hans too sees in the 'Schnee' chapter. For Nietzsche in artistic terms as for Jung in psychological terms, some kind of balance between those two tendencies in man's innermost being was required. According to Nietzsche's own understanding, to turn away from the tragic conception of reality was what Socrates had done with the introduction of the need for a moral and intellectual art. The notion that art must lead to virtue represented for Nietzsche the destruction of the true glory of Greece.

Mann, too, thought that there could not be virtue without the knowledge of sin, no interest in life without knowledge of death.[67] It is no use shunning the depths that exist both in the world and the psyche, which, after all, is projected on the outside. The unconscious, then, cannot be disregarded, in what is another

[66] For an in-depth study of this dichotomy, see Martin Vogel, *Apollinisch und Dionysisch: Geschichte eines genialen Irrtums* (Regensburg: Bosse, 1966).
[67] Mann (1960), 'Von Deutscher Republik', 11, 851

Jungian link in *Der Zauberberg*. For Nietzsche, only the pre-Socratic Greeks knew that life had a dark, terrible side to it; they recognised the contradiction of Apolline and Dionysiac: 'Jetzt öffnet sich uns gleichsam der olympische Zauberberg und zeigt uns seine Wurzeln. Der Grieche kannte und empfand die Schrecken und Entsetzlichkeiten des Daseins: um überhaupt leben zu können, mußte er vor sie hin die glänzende Traumgeburt der Olympischen stellen.'[68] And, of course, Nietzsche here speaks of a magic mountain when referring to life's mysteries.

What a pre-Socratic like Heraclitus, for instance, knew was that the *enantiodromia*, the moving towards the opposite, was a condition of life, and that fact did not paralyse him with terror. Not to accept that is to call for damage to one's own psyche, as Jung says. The individual must accept the dark side of the psyche without considering whether it is good or bad, as the artificial surrendering of good and bad, true and false, does nothing more than create tension in the psyche.

Jung writes from the psychiatrist's couch, his is a clinical vision that aims to heal, but his ideas seem to fit the character Hans Castorp remarkably well. The individual must face the personal conscious and the collective unconscious, the dormant part of man's personality, in the same way. The collective unconscious

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[68] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1991), p. 29

cannot be rationalised (reason is never enough without the unconscious), so it cannot be seen as intrinsically bad, or it will surface in the form of terror or, if one remembers Nietzsche (or Mann's own *Der Tod in Venedig*), of uncontrollable Dionysiac frenzy. If the shape of the unconscious looks sometimes terrible, that happens because the self has a dark, sinister side to it, but it should not be avoided, or it will appear in the world. That is the secret of man's self, as Mann too knows: 'Alle Humanität beruht auf Ehrfurcht vor dem Geheimnis des Menschen.'[69] The First World War was created, according to both Mann and Jung, by two different ways of looking at life — one thought to be clear, the other dark — that could not be united. Hans too saw in his boat ride that light and dark exist simultaneously everywhere. So if unresolved within, the secret of mankind can ultimately lead to a war, and that represents the clinical condition of modern man.

In Nietzschean terms, the unconscious can be said to exist beyond good and evil, and conscious and unconscious cannot make a balanced whole when one is smothered by the other. For Jung, the shadow lives within the self and wants to be a part of it in some form. It wants to live, and that is all. The anima, the feminine figure of unconscious complementarity in the psyche from which consciousness grows, lives beyond all categories, dispensing blame as well as praise. As Hans sees so clearly in his dream, to confront a man with his own shadow is to show him his own light. Never as in the vision in the snow has he

[69] Mann (1960), 'Einführung in den Zauberberg', 11, 617

been so horrified with man — with himself, with his own unconscious tendencies — and never before also has he regarded man in such high esteem. But he now understands what he needs to do. As Jung says:

> Einen Menschen seinem Schatten gegenüberstellen, heißt ihm auch sein Lichtes zeigen. Wenn man das einige Male erfahren hat, wenn man urteilend *zwischen* den Gegensätzen steht, dann spürt man unvermeidlicherweise, was mit dem eigenen Selbst gemeint ist. Wer zugleich seinen Schatten und sein Licht wahrnimmt, sieht sich von zwei Seiten, und damit *kommt er in die Mitte*.[70]

And perhaps no definition comes closer to Hans's own realisation.

In consciousness, man is his own master, so to speak, but beneath it, he discovers with shock, with terror, that unseen powers — an unseen master — exist inside him. When that happens man usually degenerates, if one might use a psychiatric term, into neurosis: 'Indem die Anima das Leben will, will sie Gutes und Böses. [...] Das körperliche sowohl wie das psychische Leben haben die Indiskretion, ohne die konventionelle Moral oft viel besser auszukommen und gesünder zu bleiben.'[71] So the illnesses of the sanatorium's patients in *Der Zauberberg*, such as Joachim's, Naphta's, Settembrini's or Clawdia's, could have other causes, to take on Jung's idea, they might have to do with a psychic lack of balance. No part of man's psyche, the light or the shadow, can be denied,

[70] Jung, 'Gut und Böse in der Analytschen Psychologie' (1974), 10, 504
[71] Again Jung, this time in 'Über die Archetypen des kollektiven Unbewußten', in *Die Archetypen und das kollektive Unbewusste*, ed. Lilly Jung-Merker und Elisabeth Rüf (Olten and Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1976), 9.1, 37.

because both are undeniable. They are part of man, as they are part of nature, because man is part of nature. And Hans alone knows it.

What he sees in his daydream is not created by anything conscious, and it does not hang on previous cognisant experiences. In fact, the whole landscape of the dream corresponds to an Arcadian world, is identified with the South, a place where Hans had never been before: '[Er] kannte die rauhe, die blasse See und hing daran mit kindlichen, schwerfälligen Gefühlen, hatte aber das Mittelmeer, Neapel, Sizilien etwa oder Griechenland, niemals erreicht.' (ZB, 672) His dream is a product of the collective unconscious, a memory shared by all people, where the archetypes reside. Archetypes are forms of the psyche, prototypical mental images with potential for meaning-making that seem to be present always and everywhere and reflect universal human thought. They cannot be represented in themselves and only become manifest in archetypal images (art, for instance, is a privileged field to reveal them).

They can be said to follow the tradition of Plato's realm of ideas, or even Kant's *a priori* categories, yet these Jungian concepts are of a kind many find hard to believe. Like a thread uniting all individuals, the collective unconscious makes psychic reality as real as physical reality, with patterns and tendencies being inherited in the very structure of the brain.[72] But even if one thinks of

[72] The human genome is thought to have between thirty and forty thousand genes. All humans are ninety-nine percent identical and every human alike shares the genes encoding the proteins involved in the construction of memory. So it is possible — theoretically at least — for humankind's psychic history to

psychological concepts such as these as being merry fantasies, the impact that psychology had, not only on the intellectual, but on the everyday life of the twentieth century was immense.

The different schools of thought, as it were, of Settembrini and Naptha and their respective ideas about death are merged in the dream, so Hans yields to none of them. He rather unites them according to his own inner law, his own personality, because such is the aspect of self-awareness that underlies a *Bildungsroman*. Hans's vision in the snow has its place beyond all false attitudes that eventually prevent man from assuming his status as master of antinomies, of understanding the contradictions that are born with life, and any understanding of death only recognises the true value of life. To make use of Jung's words, Hans perceives both his light and his shadow and thus stands in the middle:

> Der Mensch ist Herr der Gegensätze, sie sind durch ihn, und also ist er vornehmer als sie. Vornehmer als der Tod, zu vornehm für diesen, — das ist die Freiheit seines Kopfes. Vornehmer als das Leben, zu vornehm für dieses, — das ist die Frömmigkeit in seinem Herzen. Da habe ich einen Reim gemacht, ein Traumgedicht vom Menschen. Ich will dran denken. Ich will gut sein. Ich will dem Tode keine Herrschaft einräumen über meine Gedanken [...] Ich will dran denken. Ich will dem Tode Treue halten in meinem Herzen, doch mich hell erinnern, daß Treue zum Tode und Gewesenen nur Bosheit und finstere Wollust und Menschenfeindschaft ist, bestimmt sie unser Denken und Regieren. Der

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be inscribed in its DNA. Science has been producing evidence that the core ideas postulated by Jung are valid: the interactionist theory of biology postulates that mental states are capable of influencing present states, in a manner that does not depend on the storage of physical memory. So Jungian theory should not be merely ruled out as fanciful. For a more detailed approach to such an intricate subject, see the work of Rupert Sheldrake, *A New Science of Life: The Hypothesis of Formative Causation* (London: Blond & Briggs, 1981), and *The Presence of the Past: Morphic Resonance and the Habits of Nature* (New York: Vintage, 1989). And there is also the work of the Jungian scholar Willy Obrist: *Archetypen: Natur und Kulturwissenschaften bestätigen C. G. Jung* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1990).

> Mensch soll um der Güte und Liebe willen dem Tode keine Herrschaft einräumen über seine Gedanken. (ZB, 679)

This lengthy quotation from the 'Schnee' chapter illustrates that death can have no power over man's life — just as life cannot pretend that death does not exist —, but that it *is* in man. And the balance required between these two extremes again comes close to Jung's ideas.

Hans's response to this realisation is ethical, it is the answer of ethical love, an answer that accepts the essential dichotomy between good and bad, light and dark, without asking if they are true or false. Only ethical love — not of the conventional kind — allows him to live with that insight, and to be like that is to assume the dignity of man. The concept of self, so dear to *Bildung*, presupposes knowledge of the whole of man, so the inner antinomies must be bound together: as Hans says, death is in his head and life is in his heart. Following Jung's terminology, the shadow belongs to the light, the unconscious and the conscious must be merged: 'Der Selbst ist nicht bloß ein Begriff oder ein logisches Postulat, sondern eine seelische Wirklichkeit, die nur zu einem Teil bewußt ist, im übrigen aber auch das Leben des Unbewußten umgreift.'[73] As a *Bildungsroman* that attempts to fully portray the modern individual, to fully portray the *self*, *Der Zauberberg* reflects this as well — that is where it is different from previous *Bildungsromane*, therein lies its modern character. The

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[73] Jung, 'Versuch eines psychologischen Deutung des Trinitätsdogmas', in *Zur Psychologie westlicher und östlicher Religion*, ed. Marianne Niehus-Jung et al. (Zurich and Stuttgart: Rascher, 1963), 11, 171

original *Bildungsromane* may have been interested in the inner world of the psyche, but, in literature, the full 'exploration of the self', as Thornton says, had to await the support 'of late nineteenth and early twentieth century philosophy and psychology before it could fully develop'.[74]

The unconscious is part of the self, and if it appears as evil, Jung none the less says that it is of the utmost importance not to ignore it, that evil within, or to reject any definition that regards it as irrelevant and not even to be thought of (as Settembrini says to Hans regarding death several times during the novel). Doing that creates maladies such as the one that led to the First World War, and this represents Hans's clarification of consciousness. If Hans sees all of this in a dream, that is because, according to Jung, dreams are impartial and spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche, not prone to be controlled from the outside and uncontrolled by the regulating power of the conscious mind. Dreams are pure nature and show the unalloyed truth, so the dream world is fitted to give Hans Castorp an insight into an ethical attitude that is in accordance with the basic elements of man's nature.

Dream, furthermore, is frequently employed by Mann to clarify the tensions in characters' lives, as it seems that only the unconscious world can assist them when consciousness has strayed too far away from its foundations and finds itself in an impasse, which is many times created by man's own fear of

[74] Thornton (1994), p. 68

the unconscious psyche.[75] Observing the confrontations between his mentors and with his own different ways of viewing life and death, Hans finds in a dream the key to overcoming oppositions, as he realises that man is a being greater than all contradictions.[76] This is all the more important because, as Jung says, the dream is the true path to self-awareness — self-awareness, of course, is essential to the *Bildungsprozeß* —, because it is not merely a reflection of the ego-consciousness. The dream communicates a message from the unconscious, it is what Jung calls the unitary soul of humanity, so the dream unveils a truth that was once shared by the whole of mankind.

This is Jung's view of dreams, and it is also his view of literature. And if literature is supposed to show fundamental truths that have been repressed by civilisation, as Jung says, this last assumption can be linked neatly with the *Bildungsroman*'s role in contributing to the development of the reader. The dream, then, reflects the self rather than the ego, it is alien to the ego. If the dream seems strange or ill-defined, this happens because consciousness has alienated man from the self; yet the self is the truth from which the ego grew.

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[75] See, as an example, Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig*, in *Meistererzählungen* (Zurich: Manesse, 1945), p. 295f. With Aschenbach's release in a Dionysiac dream, *Der Tod in Venedig* again serves as a good example of this assumption.

[76] If Hans forgets his dream, he later recaptures what he learned in it — the necessary balance between life and death — by means of music. And this is no coincidence, as music, after all, depends on the quality of balance. Only the intrinsic harmony of a music piece, the dynamic equilibrium of opposing forces like variation, echo, reverberation, and combination of musical patterns, keeps the continuum from collapsing. Musically, but also, in this case, psychologically and ontologically, there is a need to achieve a balance of opposites.

Hans's whole vision takes place outside of time, in the dream world. When he looks at his watch and having thought he had been there for hours, Hans discovers that the whole experience in the snow lasted barely ten minutes. It is appropriate that the vision takes place outside of reality, as it were, because it shows that fundamental truths can sometimes only be grasped outside man's familiar surroundings, that is to say, not in the conscious state, but in the limbo between sleep and wakefulness, in the realm of the unconscious.

The way of the unconscious is the way that leads to the acceptance of death in life, and it is what Hans Castorp had always called the *dämonisch* way of the genius. Defying all normal moral conventions, Hans reaches life through death as he learns that true knowledge of life can only be brought about by cognition of death, and these are 'attitudes that characterize much modern thought and, specifically, most literature of the modern period'.[77] Hans subdues his inborn attraction to death and learns to understand man's position in the world as neither simply ignoring death nor being afraid of the dark and occult aspect of life, but embracing it without letting it taking control of his psyche. And the way to resist the alluring danger of death is ethical and moral behaviour. As Freud famously said, the goal of all life is death; death is unavoidable, yet confronting it as Hans does is the only possible answer to that inevitable *Unform*: 'Die Begründung der Welt der Form und der Humanität im Ethischen braucht

[77] Ziolkowski (1969), p. 228

eine tiefere Verankerung, wenn die Welt der Menschenfreundlichkeit dem Dämonischen nicht verfallen soll.'[78]

An affirmative attitude towards life as a whole is the very essence of a true *Bildungsroman*, so Hans's plain *Sympathie mit dem Tode* has at least to be slightly curbed, as it were, in order to allow for his *Bildung*: 'In the best sense, Castorp possesses Nietzsche's double perspective. Conservative, yet daring, he accepts the traditional *Respice Finem* but corrects it with the Goethean "Remember to Live".'[79]

3. Familiar beginnings: Nick as American initiate

> Masculinity is not something given to you, something you're born with, but something you gain... and you gain it by winning small battles with honor.
> Norman Mailer, *Cannibals and Christians*

As the protagonist of Hemingway's short-story sequence, Nick Adams can be seen as part of a tradition of American literary figures. As the psychologically complex vernacular youth from a problematical middle-class family, Nick is part of a tradition can be traced back to not only Twain, Crane or Anderson, but also

[78] Kristiansen (1986), p. 273
[79] Hatfield (1979), p. 41. Bearing Wilhelm Meister's experiences with the society of the tower in mind, it is interesting to note the similarities between Goethe's and Mann's novels: 'Der Saal der Vergangenheit ist somit der Saal des Lebens, in dem das Leben künstlerich dargestellt ist — den Tod eingeschlossen. Die Urnen und Sarkophage sind in die künstleriche Darstellung des Ganzen des Lebens integriert. Dass der Weg zu diesem Saal des Lebens durch das Tor des Todes führt [zeigt, dass] der Saal der Vergangenheit ist als ein künstlerischer Versuch zu verstehen, den Tod zu einem Teil des Lebens zu machen.' See Saariluoma (1985), p. 332.

to Howells or James, who all set the standards for the fictional American characters that are nowadays thought of as modern.

Nick has often been compared to Huck Finn — whose book of adventures Hemingway considered to have marked the beginning of truly American literature, as seen before —, as they are both outdoor young boys, and also very nervous: 'In both Huck and Nick, Hemingway's generic hero, we have a sensitive, rather passive but courageous and masculine boy, solitary and out of doors, who is dissatisfied with respectability, chiefly as represented by a Bible-quoting woman of the house.'[80] As a young boy, Nick is indecisive and passive, and that particular trait of his personality has many a time been confused with weakness. But, according to Ann Douglas, American literature offers little consideration to protagonists who are but victims: 'The hero of classical American Literature has the energy, the power, and the strange, ludicrous dignity of the self-tormented.'[81] And some of these very same characteristics, as will be seen, can be attributed to Nick Adams.

As in *Der Zauberberg* with Hans Castorp, Nick's primary experience, and this from a very young age, is contact with death. This experience of death, Nick's initiation into death, when seen in connection with his own nervous and

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[80] Young (1959), p. 36
[81] Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty* (London: Picador, 1996), p. 217

cowardly behaviour, eventually gives rise to the early indecisive and tentative nature of his persona:

> He was not afraid of anything definite as yet. But he was getting very afraid. Then suddenly he was afraid of dying. Just a few weeks before at home, in church, they had sung a hymn, "Some day the silver cord will break". While they were singing the hymn Nick had realized that some day he must die. It made him feel quite sick. It was the first time he had ever realized that he himself would have to die sometime. (NAS, 'Three Shots', 14)

Nick's fear of death and his inherently nervous behaviour are somehow related to his family context, presumably to the fact that his mother is a devout religious person, as is made clear later.

The experiences of death that Nick witnesses in his early years and which add to his own inner insecurities do not have, as Hans's do, a certain dignified air to them. Nothing of the kind, as death is always shown attached to extreme violence, and that even before Nick becomes a direct witness of the horrors of the First World War. The violent nature of death can best be seen in the story 'Indian Camp', one of the first of the sequence, which marks Nick's initiation into the gruesome aspect of death (just like Huck Finn, whose adventures produce a total of thirteen corpses). This is death just like it was in the American frontier, shocking and violent, and not toned down by spirituality and centuries of religion, as one can find in *Der Zauberberg*. And for Nick, who is a sensitive young boy, the effect all this has on him is made all the more serious.

In 'Indian Camp', Nick is asked by his father, who is a doctor, to accompany him to a Native American camp near the place where they live, and where the doctor will deliver a baby. An Amerindian woman had been in labour for several days, so when they arrive, all that can be heard are the woman's screams of desperation. Only Nick's father seems unaffected by the grim scenario. When Nick expresses discomfort with the situation, his father just advises him to focus on what is important, telling him to concentrate and understand that giving birth is always painful. In a way, and from early on, life is equated with pain. When the labour is over, the doctor attempts to speak to the baby's father, who is lying in a bunk with his head facing the wall. The doctor soon discovers that the man, not having been able to bear the screaming any longer, had cut his own throat 'from ear to ear'. The doctor tries to hide the ghastly vision from his son, but 'Nick, standing in the door of the kitchen, had a good view of the upper bunk when his father, the lamp in one hand, tipped the Indian's head back' (IOT, NAS, 'Indian Camp', 20).[82] Nick, who had been taken by his father to the camp to witness a birth, thus becomes an involuntary witness of a violent death.

Trying to explain the situation to his young son, the doctor tells Nick that the man had killed himself because he could not 'stand things'. So from an early

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[82] For the ease of reference, I will refer to *The Nick Adams Stories* throughout, as the short stories dealing with Nick that were published posthumously can more easily be consulted there. Still, whenever I refer to stories published during Hemingway's lifetime, I indicate this in parentheses, before referring to where they can be found in *The Nick Adams Stories*, the book in which the stories originally appeared.

age Nick is faced with the fact that psychological endurance is important to resist the more upsetting aspects of life, something he will do well to remember when faced with the grim spectacle of war. Yet, as a young boy, Nick is incapable of showing this endurance. He is full of fears, and many of them remain unexplained. When he is unable to stand alone in a tent at night, his uncle mentions his cowardly nature to his father, but the latter excuses his son: 'I know he's an awful coward,' his father said, 'but we're all yellow at that age.' (NAS, 'Three Shots', 14)

This is an early indication of the understanding and complicity between Nick and his father. The doctor too is of a nervous kind and not exactly brave either. When deciding to confront another Native because of some business matter, the doctor threatens to hit him, angered with the disrespect the other man shows him. But he too is unable to act decisively: 'The doctor chewed the beard on his lower lip and looked at Dick Boulton. Then he turned away and walked up the hill to the cottage. They could see from his back how angry he was.' (IOT, NAS, 'The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife', 24) Whether this episode is an act of cowardice or not is open to interpretation, but, in the sequence of the stories, the doctor is in fact seen as somewhat cowardly, especially as he ultimately commits suicide.

Nick's weakness cannot be seen as a totally negative quality, as he is still very young at this time of the sequence, his formative years are by no means

complete, his initiation, or its beginnings, still lack a distinctive character, either of confirmation or victimisation. As he grows up, that apprehension progressively grows into a somewhat positive quality, as Nick always shows himself to be guarded and pondered, and often chooses to keep himself out of trouble, which does not mean that, by choosing to do so, he is not acting with determination. As Hemingway said, motion should never be mistaken for action, and this applies to the adolescent Nick, as can be seen in 'The Light of the World', in which Nick deliberately avoids physical confrontation with the owner of a bar, going against the probable intention of his friend Tom:

> 'Listen,' I said. 'Let's get out.'
> 'You punks clear the hell out of here,' the bartender said.
> 'I said we were going out,' I said. 'It wasn't your idea.' (WTN, NAS, 'The Light of the World', 40)

Nick does not act like this out of cowardice, but rather because there was no reason for gratuitous confrontation, which reveals that he is capable of clear thinking and of sound judgement, and that speaks for his independence. At liberty from Tom, Nick shows an early autonomy from the group mind, which is a feature of his character throughout: the individualistic Nick is sceptical of whatever is supposed to bring him into the group, to couple him with the masses.

Despite his sensitivity, Nick none the less tries to acquire a measure of toughness throughout. Toughness is seen as being related to courage, which is, again, very important for the American initiate: 'You got to be tough' is what

Nick says to one of the hobos in 'The Battler' (IOT, NAS, 49). The affirmation of masculinity is evident in *The Nick Adams Stories*, and is a frequent theme of Hemingway's fiction as a whole, as Thomas Strychacz, who calls him 'the quintessential macho writer', notes: 'Hemingway's biographers and critics have never doubted that his obsessions with male authority shaped both his writing career and life.'[83]

In 'The Battler', Nick is hit by a train brakeman and this gives him a black eye. The fact that he wishes he could see his own black eye, and admire it, as indicated in the story, is a sign of what Strychacz calls his 'initiation into manhood', something which Ad, another character of this story, never fails to praise: '[Ad] Francis constantly refers to the importance of visible wounds as an index of toughness, acknowledging, for instance, Nick's black eye with his first words ("Where did you get that shiner?") before going on to dramatize his own battered face: "Look here!" and "ever seen one like that?"' [84] This concept of manhood is strongly linked with physical courage — which serves as a way to measure growth —, and this spirit of physicality is always significant in the framework of the American narrative of initiation.

Nick is trained by his friends Tom and Bill into being tough, as they work, in a sense, as Nick's mentors: 'His [Tom's] philosophy is that in a tough world

[83] Thomas Strychacz, 'Dramatizations of Manhood in Hemingway's In Our Time and The Sun Also Rises', in *American Literature*, 61 (1989), 246
[84] Loc. cit.

you have to be tough, and he seems intent on showing [it] to Nick.'[85] But their limitations, as well as Ad's self-pity — which is manifest in spite of his toughness —, become obvious to Nick. Nick's courage, it seems, does not need peer validation, and he learns how to adjust to his inner fears, being determined, yet balanced, and in this way he develops, as he realises from a young age that the root of all courage resides in fear, as he tells his sister:

> 'It makes me feel strange. But I'm not afraid.'
> 'I said that first.'
> 'I know. Maybe we say it because we are afraid.' (NAS, 'The Last Good Country', 89)

The insecurity of the character Nick Adams is not linked exclusively to toughness or lack of it. When trying to save the life of the old and disgraced boxer Ole Andreson in 'The Killers', Nick shows that his toughness is tied to voluntarism and compassion. He is the only one trying to do something for the soon-to-be-killed boxer, against the relative indifference of his acquaintances towards violence: his friend George advises him to conform, but Nick's principles tell him he needs to counteract such injustices. That is an important aspect of his growth, because trying to deceive the killers goes against his own inherent fears.

Nick's insecurity, as said before, can be traced back to his own tense family situation. This weight given to family problems and their effect on the protagonist shows that Nick's growth also happens because of — and *despite* —

[85] Flora (1982), p. 72

family pressure. Nick's complicity with his father, for instance, is clearly directed against his mother in 'The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife': when the father goes to call Nick from the woods at his wife's request, both father and son decide to go hunting against the mother's wishes: 'Nick's choice of his father at the story's end is one of the most touching moments in the Nick canon. The father has been severely beaten and needs something; he finds it in his son. [...] The doctor's release is one in nature and with his son's companionship.'[86]

Nick does not see any of the action that takes place in this last story, but a sense of conflict in the Adamses is nevertheless conveyed, from which Nick finds refuge, in the best tradition of the narrative of initiation, in nature. The only time the mother is "physically" seen in this short-story is in her room, her blinds drawn, in an atmosphere that somewhat suggests an unhealthy and sombre approach to life, impossibly far from the green heart of nature where her son feels at ease.

It is not at all far-fetched to associate the derogatory status given to Nick's mother with her potent religious convictions and to a God that Nick has doubts if he believes in, as he admits in a conversation with his sister:

> 'Nickie, do you believe in God? You don't have to answer if you don't want to.'
> 'I don't know.' (NAS, 'The Last Good Country', 90)

[86] Ibid., p. 42

The idea of excessively clinging to God is seen as negative, and it surfaces at times when the family situation is referred to, relates to the strain the mother puts on every member of the family. This is especially true and at its most evident in the case of Nick's father, as becomes clear in 'Fathers and Sons', but happens likewise with Nick, because his mother clashes with him too: as Nick's sister says to him, their mother dislikes his writing, for example, because she thinks 'everything you [Nick] write is morbid' (NAS, 'The Last Good Country', 90). And this is something the reader can assume concerns the mother's faith.

When the doctor comes back home in a nervous mood after the incident with Dick Boulton, for instance, his wife does not leave her darkened room to be with him. As an irrealist person who is disconnected from reality, she offers him — in an echo of Huck Finn — a biblical quotation instead: 'Remember, that he who ruleth his spirit is great than he that taketh a city,' said his wife. She was a Christian Scientist. Her Bible, her copy of *Science and Health* and her *Quarterly* were on a table beside her bed in the darkened room.' (NAS, 'The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife', 25)

All through the stories that make up the sequence, Nick is never seen in the presence of his mother, but even his relationship with his father is never shown as wholly unproblematic: 'The [...] stories of Nick's boyhood, then, revolve around Nick's relationship with his father. Nick increasingly senses his father's inadequacies, but the stories also contain much evidence of Nick's deep

feeling for his father.'[87] Yet even despite the strong ties with his father, Nick's only true affection seems to be devoted to his sister. Nick and his sister always think of everybody else in the family as being 'the others', and in 'The Last Good Country', Nick's sister rejoices in the fact that she runs away from home with her brother, because that meant being away from a strained home atmosphere: 'Are we going to be like the others and have fights? [...] Haven't we seen enough fights in families?' (NAS, 'The Last Good Country', 85)

Even Nick's inability to commit himself romantically, a tendency which is shown throughout, can be attributed to his parents' marriage, which shapes his own vision of that institution, even if he himself ends up marrying: 'You had this fake ideal [marriage] planted in you and then you lived your life to it.' (NAS, 'On Writing', 235) Conversations, expectations and advice about marriage and commitment are recurrent themes of several of the short stories that comprise the sequence, and, usually, marriage is seen in a negative light, because women are frequently seen in a suspicious, disapproving way, something which is certainly not unrelated to the status given to Nick's mother. In *The Nick Adams Stories*, men are frequently without women: 'Women will be important to his [Nick's] life—he will even marry—but Hemingway characteristically show[s] him as a man without a woman.'[88] No definite view, none the less, is presented, as one story takes away what a previous one may have given: the importance of

[87] Ibid., p. 50
[88] Ibid., p. 55

marriage in 'Now I Lay Me' is almost immediately discarded in 'In Another Country'.

Despite his family situation and his own inner problems, Nick still manages to reach an even vision of himself, and his honesty in that field is significant. This honest self-evaluation is, as seen in the case of Henry Fleming, important in the framework of the American narrative of initiation. Nick, too, knows his weaknesses and his strengths, and does not attempt to fool himself by pretending he is more than what he really is.

3.1. The reality of war as intensification of Nick's initiation into violence and death

> There died a myriad,
> And of the best, among them,
> For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
> For a botched civilization.
>
> Ezra Pound, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*

Young names the second chapter of *The Nick Adams Stories* 'On his Own', as these are the stories where Nick is seen away from his suffocating family scenery. But, exploring things by himself, Nick is only confronted with more violence and violent death, as well as with grotesque characters who seem to show him the ugliest side of life. The conflict with shattered people and the negativity that they convey are part of Hemingway's familiar technique of juxtaposing other characters, and their otherness, to the protagonist, so that the narrator can portray through indirection the essential strengths of character of the

protagonist. And Nick is in fact submitted to sudden, often violent, confrontations with otherness to see whether, and how, he changes.

In 'The Battler' and 'The Light of the World', the reader sees Nick in the company of hobos and prostitutes, in 'The Killers' of Mafia-style executioners, and most of these figures are fictionally constructed as grotesque and exaggerated, some of them characters who at some point in their lives broke down under the weight of circumstances — Anderson's grotesques of middle America come to mind. The character Ad, for instance, in 'The Battler', is a former boxing hero, a true fighter who should be an example of toughness, one who broke down at some point, which confirms to Nick that mere toughness will get him nowhere. Nick steadily and surely evolves from the perspective of his friends Tom and Bill.

Ad's ordeal shows Nick that there are things that can only be fought in other ways. Ad was a boxer, and he stays somehow heroic for Nick, because what injured him beyond repair was not boxing, but unfulfilled love. Courage is very different from toughness, and Nick sees that toughness was of no use to Ad in dealing with his loss. Ad's status is that of a possibility, Nick's possible grotesque *Doppelgänger*, lest Nick mistakes toughness for courage. Love made Ad maniacal, and love, for all its allure, can also destroy, it can hurt, as Nick knows from his experiences with Prudence and Marjorie. Again, in these two instances, women are shown negatively — though Prudence's sensuality gains a

redemptive character in 'Fathers and Sons' (WTN) —, yet, as the obese prostitute Alice shows Nick that she too can love, despite the connotations of her trade, Nick sees that the ability to love the good that exists in life can indeed be the light of the world. Even in 'The Battler', because he is helped by Bugs, Nick comes to realise that 'even if the world is hostile and fierce there are caring hands and caring voices'.[89]

It is nevertheless violence, war and death, and not considerations about love, that lie at the heart of the sequence. War *is* death, and a very pointless death at that, and love is not offered as a means to counteract it, as happens in *Der Zauberberg*. To fight in a war such as the Great War, and for whatever reasons, was to be engaged in something few, if any, understood. Still, when Nick decides to go to Europe, there is reason to believe that he, like many young Americans of the time, was looking to affirm his masculinity, and for confirmation in his initiation, which is a remain of notions of war as an adventurous testing ground that novels such as *The Red Badge of Courage* had not totally eradicated: 'Combined with the thirst for adventure was the fact that Darwinian views which had shaped so much of American naturalist fiction were accompanied by the Spencerian translation of these views into sociological thought postulating the beneficent [...] results of struggle.'[90] Other aspects might have contributed to Nick's desire to join the war, such as the chance to break away from his family or

[89] Ibid., p. 93
[90] Stanley Cooperman, *World War I and the American Novel* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), p. 49

from an American society seen as morally flawed, perhaps even patriotism.[91] Violence and conflict, as always, also played a major role: in 'The Killers', for instance, Nick decides to leave Chicago because of the brutality of the situation he sees himself involved in: 'I'm going to get out of this town' (MWW, NAS, 'The Killers', 69) is the only answer Nick can find to the violence around him.

But escaping from a situation of localised violence to a war scenario reveals that the question of manhood vis-à-vis courage remains central to the American narrative of initiation, and war is still frequently seen as a means to achieve that manhood. Yet, inevitably, Nick soon receives his own red badge, and learns the error of his original position, a lesson to which every dead soldier and civilian, regardless of their condition or motivation, bore witness in the Great War, as the narrator of 'A Way You'll Never Be' poignantly and bluntly, and brutally, points out: 'The hot weather had swollen them [the corpses] all alike regardless of nationality.' (NAS, 155)

Hemingway's style, as can be seen, displays the hallmarks of Crane's prose, with its honest, brutal depiction of war: 'Hemingway reclaimed the war from cliché and "made it new", defamiliarized, shorn of heroic virtue and martial rhetoric.'[92] The description of war as a meaningless and brutal experience, and

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[91] See, for example, Debra A. Moddelmog, 'The Unifying Consciousness of a Divided Conscience: Nick Adams as Author of In Our Time', in *American Literature*, 60 (1988), 598.
[92] Mark A. Graves and Philip K. Jason, 'Ernest Hemingway', in *Encyclopedia of American War Literature* (Westport and London: Greenwood, 2001), p. 117

Nick's witnessing of it, changes his outlook on life, and some of his old fears are brought back, even intensified. Hemingway achieves this by connecting events from several short stories, by linking up Nick's outlook with views he had had before, which again speaks for the validity of seeing the stories dealing with Nick as a sequence. The looseness of the short-story sequence, furthermore, only serves to accentuate the possibility of simultaneous presence of contents from different stories.

Before he joins the conflict, when he is on board a boat heading to Europe and to war, Nick feels that he is not is going to be killed in battle, just like he felt, strangely enough, before he went home with his father after the baby's birth in 'Indian Camp', which seemed at the time to be Nick's refusal to acknowledge violent death and which can now be seen quite ironically in the light of his marching to war. He now has the same feeling that he will not die: 'I know. I feel that way. Other people can get killed but not me. I feel that absolutely.' (NAS, 'Night Before Landing', 142) It all seems just to be a reappearance of Nick's insecurities. Having drunk quite a lot, his seems to be the talk of somebody who is in fact rather afraid of what he is going to find in the trenches of Europe. And, in fact, Nick's self is completely obliterated by his experience in the war.

America's participation in the First World War, which only started in 1917, confronted many Americans with the brutal reality of large-scale modern war. In American fiction, age-old romantic and heroic notions associated with

war were finally wiped out for good. That trend, which had started with Crane, is finally complete, as, despite the ghastliness of the American Civil War, the First World War was a kind of conflict on a scale the world had never seen before, as Paul Fussell notes: 'But even if those at home had wanted to know the realities of the [Great] war, they couldn't have without experiencing them: its conditions were too novel, its industrialized ghastliness too unprecedented. The war would have been simply unbelievable.'[93] The omission, for the most part, of great detail in the description of the concrete realities of battle in *The Nick Adams* Stories, something which follows, after all, the famous 'iceberg-theory', only increases the reader's uneasiness about the events of Nick's war experience, and the extent of his traumas.

The United States did not lose many soldiers — many more had been killed during the Civil War — and there was, of course, no fighting on American soil. More soldiers were killed by the great flu epidemic of 1918-19 than in battle. But the sense that a civilisation was being destroyed was felt by many American soldiers, according to American fiction of the time, as they became witnesses of the social and cultural collapse of Europe. The war was a decisive moment for Nick as a raw and naïve initiate, something which can be seen in a parallel to what happened to his country: 'The United States of America itself suffered a loss of innocence and came of age after the First World War.'[94] The

[93] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 87
[94] Sequeira (1975), p. 132

sense of powerlessness was intense, and fear became a part of the modern temper Nick displays.

As a soldier, Nick is a witness to the destruction of Europe, and furthermore, he is seriously wounded in the war. When that happens, his old fear of death reappears stronger than ever: 'And I was very much afraid to die, and often lay in bed at night by myself, afraid to die and wondering how I would be when I went back to the front again.' (MWW, NAS, 'In Another Country', 171) The fear of death is now clearly related to the night and to darkness, as the wounded soldier is incapable of sleeping without having some kind of light on — as is seen in 'Now I Lay Me' (MWW) —, if he manages to sleep at all. Traumatised by his experience on the battlefield, Nick's 'terror in the face of potential selflessness—permanent in death; temporary in sleep—has resulted in a severe dissociation of the self'.[95] Awake in the dark, he attempts to think about the happier times of his youth, but he does not find any absence of darkness in those memories: the past he remembers is not without conflict and sorrow.

This aspect of disintegration of the self is central to modern(ist) fiction: just as Hans's social, flatlands-self is dissipated in the magic mountain, the basis on which Nick's self was constructed is dissipated too, as Nick's middle-class education and values could not possibly have helped him deal with war. In 'A

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[95] Steven K. Hoffman, 'The Unity of Hemingway's Short Fiction', in Harold Bloom (ed.), *Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Chelsea House, 1985), p. 181f

Way You'll Never Be', Nick is supposed to go to the front to boost the morale of the troops, as his injuries do not allow him to do much more than that. But his wound seems to go much deeper, it seems to be much more than just a physical one, as Nick reveals himself as being a man badly scarred on the inside. The use of stream of consciousness techniques in this particular story allows the reader to have privileged access, as it were, to Nick's own mental condition. As Hoffman correctly observes, Nick's is the oddly right choice for an absurd mission: 'At the moment, his [Nick's] "self", like the entire American presence in the region, is solely the uniform; the clothes are as dimly suggestive of a more substantial identity as they are of the substantial military support they are designed to promise.'[96]

Despite the normal results of the use of stream of consciousness techniques, by which mental processes appear as somehow connected in a chaotic, unpatterned manner, Nick's mind appears to be in a state of remarkable disorientation: 'Hemingway has, of course, evoked the quality of Nick's mind in other stories, but through essentially objective description of what Nick saw and what was said. Here he shows us the alarming state of Nick's mental processes.'[97] Trying to prove his own sanity and his worth, Nick wants to go back to the front to fight in the war, but the sympathetic attitude of his superiors and his awareness of his own behaviour let him know that his condition is a

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[96] Ibid., p. 182
[97] Flora (1982), p. 126

clinical one: 'He was very disappointed that he felt this way and more disappointed even, that is was so obvious to Captain Paravicini.' (WTN, NAS, 'A Way You'll Never Be', 160) Paravicini, none the less, shows Nick that it is possible to act with honour even in the face of the horror of life, but this is a stance Nick cannot yet adopt. Self-condemnatory, the usually reticent Nick Adams cannot keep quiet now. He talks without stopping, not showing the restraint the reader had come to expect of him, and more than one critic has noticed in his behaviour what clearly seems to be the effects of shellshock, something very common in soldiers who fought in the First World War.[98]

The nervous young boy that Nick had been returns even more nervous than before. Previously, he had been a spectator of violence and death in the life of others, now he is himself a victim of violence. If Nick was sensitive before, the dreadful theatre of war makes him hypersensitive, as he is not only injured in the flesh, but also psychologically, emotionally, spiritually.

3.2. 'A clean, well-lighted place': the birth of the figure of the code hero

A man said to the universe:
'Sir, I exist!'
'However,' replied the universe,
"The fact has not created in me
A sense of obligation.'
Stephen Crane, *A poem*

Jung compared the shadow, the unconscious, to a wasteland, and he used the First World War as a vast analogue to the unseen psyche. Nick, after the war,

[98] Aubrey Dillon-Malone, *Hemingway: The Grace and the Pressure* (London: Robson, 1999), p. 41

and having gone as deep into his own shadow as possible, tries to pick up the pieces of his own self, trying to make his own separate peace. He does indeed clearly show the pathological condition of a disrupted consciousness, yet his mind is not destroyed beyond repair: in 'Big Two-Hearted River', perhaps the crucial, paradoxically most revealing story of the sequence, Nick undergoes a spiritual and physical process of cleansing: 'The basic rhythm of the Nick Adams stories has been a movement from loss or trauma to recovery and fortification [...]. Nick Adams keeps recovering. He has a strong strain of American optimism and vitality.'[99]

As an ordinary young man at the beginning of the twentieth century and like so many of the young men of his time, Nick had undergone the horrors of the First World War, so his is not an easy task. His psychological condition, furthermore, sees its own reflection in the destruction of the world order, and now has little to turn to. Jung maintained that, overall, the modern individual was in need of therapy, as was the world.

When being treated in hospital for his wounds, both Nick and the other war wounded are thought of as being 'in another country' because of their injuries, and perhaps also because they have been part of a war that the ones who did not fight in it cannot understand. But the names of his fellow patients are never mentioned, as Nick is in a way alienated from them as well. He is in

[99] Flora (1982), p. 176

another country in a wholly new way, because he is away from his native environment: he is also away from 'the last good country'. Nick Adams finds that therapy not in his own inner resources, so to speak, but in quiet activity in the middle of nature, in the woods of his native country. With the bankruptcy of the old institutional and moral values, little of what came from the exterior could help, and the same is seen in the story of Hans Castorp. Only the individual can provide himself and the world with whatever fragile order, that is an inevitability, as the individual is part of an overall individualistic society where all community seems to be unreliable. The only solidarity in *The Nick Adams Stories* seems to come from the sharing of a common and horrible fate, as Nick's psyche, generally speaking, is as shattered as that of the modern individual that has experienced war. Having been wounded at several levels in the First World War, the only absolute assurance that Nick has is that suffering is the common lot of all men and women alike.

Nick's own psychological crisis makes him turn to what is seen as the last good thing left: to heal himself, to put it like this, Nick returns to nature, as the contact with the soil is a source of strength and gladness for him, and its fruits are plentiful. In the unchanging earth he finds continuity, it is there that he gets a glimpse of the uncomplaining attitude he needs to have when facing adversity. As in Thoreau's *Walden*, it is in nature that Nick finds his very own way to live deliberately, and to confront the essential facts of life.

Nick rediscovers the joy of being alive, relishing the look, the feel and the smell of the natural world. His love of the good earth, of the cool streams and clean air, of the fresh odour of woodland allows him to go back to what is viewed in much American literature as the fundamental principles. The natural world is seen a source of reassurance in much American fiction, as mentioned before: possibilities are endless in nature. America's view of nature belongs to what Whitman called the 'open road', filled with prospects, and also the only road in which the individual can truly find himself, the place where the creature, so to speak, can again be at one with creation.[100] The quasi-religiosity Nick finds in nature consists of this, as he confesses that he feels in the middle of it 'like the way I ought to feel in church' (NAS, 'The Last Good Country', 89). Seen closely, Nick's feeling resembles that of Crane's Henry Fleming discovering a natural temple near the battlefields. Only this time nothing can profane the sacredness of nature.

American literature hardly possessed a significant urban imagery until the beginning of the century, long after literary movements in other countries had begun to see man as a sophisticated city-dweller. This view of American literature holds good for the whole of the nineteenth century, and even when Modernism was flourishing in Europe, America saw a rise of a movement called Traditionalism, a regionally-based and nostalgic literature. The main corpus of

[100] 'Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons,\It is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the\earth.' See 'Song of the Open Road', in Walt Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose and Letters*, ed. E. Holloway (London: Nonesuch, 1971), p. 139.

American literature had never been excessively anti-urban or bucolic, but it did show a fascination with natural scenarios, and many of his figures are made out to be completely natural, that is, living close to nature, as can be seen with Thoreau or Twain. And that is also very true for Hemingway's Nick Adams: 'Again and again [Hemingway] invoke[s] the image of a green landscape — a terrain either wild or, if cultivated, rural — as a symbolic repository of meaning and value.'[101]

In contact with the earth, Nick finds in himself a new attitude, one that will not be shaken by the inevitable defeat man faces in the world, by the death that is the ultimate end of life. In a sense, Nick's new-found conduct can be said to be an attempt to find the best way to face that defeat. In close union with nature, he is allowed to rediscover his resilience and his balance, and he again asserts his values against the pain and shock of death by absorbing all of his previous painful experiences. This is an attitude, based on the idea, common in American literature, of nature as healer, that will continue to serve him. Already before, in 'The End of Something' (IOT) and 'The Three-Day Blow', when Nick is suffering because of his failed relationships, as mentioned before, he retreats to the woods, to nature, to the essential (where the reader can better assess Nick's sturdy fortitude): 'Outside now the Marge business was no longer so tragic. It

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[101] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 362f. Marx, none the less, notes that, in the 1920s, the machine was already part of a process that was destroying the natural ideal. One should remember the beginning of 'Big Two-Hearted River', where the nature that surrounds Nick is burnt-over.

was not even very important. The wind blew everything like that away.' (IOT, NAS, 'The Three-Day Blow', 216) Now, after the war, and if he is still afraid of dying, Nick comes back to the woods of his younger years to find a way of not being afraid to live. His life is rebuilt upon what is there — the river is there, the fishes are there — and not upon what is not there. Nature is always there to accept the American initiate back, very far away from the mechanical world of large-scale war, so Nick goes back to the natural world.

Unlike Hans Castorp, Nick's path does not depend on mental or intellectual activity, it is an instinctive choice, he relies on his senses and on what he feels, not on any mental activity. Absorbed by every action, Nick is engaged in 'an act of calculated retrenchment, involving a deliberate refusal to admit the free play of the higher intellectual faculties—reason, speculative thought [...]— as legitimate guides for conduct'.[102] And this attitude belongs in the sequence of a long American tradition of suspicion of intellectualism:

> Now I re-examine philosophies and religions,
> They may prove well in lecture-rooms, yet not prove at all
> under the spacious clouds and along the landscape and
> flowing currents.[103]

As can be gathered from these verses — and as seen in chapter I —, the above-mentioned tradition, one which prefers the realm of the natural over that of the intellectual, has been a feature of American letters since (at least) Whitman. Seen

[102] Robert Evans, 'Hemingway and the Pale Caste of Thought', in *American Literature*, 38 (1966), 164
[103] Whitman (1971), 'Song of the Open Road', p. 140

in this light, Nick's decision to live instinctively is related to a rejection of intellectual abstractions, of things he cannot verify: 'As an empiricist he [Nick] must learn to look honestly upon what he sees, to make every effort to spare himself delusion by discovering what he really feels rather than what he is told he should feel.' Considering this, James B. Colvert thus sees Nick's as a choice of courage.[104] Nick decides to rely on his primal instincts, something which is not infrequent in Hemingway's fiction, yet his decision can be seen in a different, perhaps not so negative-primal perspective, considering the events and the magnitude of the war: 'Historians have estimated that in excess of 8 million men died in World War I, which lends added imaginative relevance to Hemingway's primitivist myth of getting out alive.'[105]

The best way to face life is 'not to think about it', to use another well-known Hemingway expression, and Nick deliberately does so in 'Big Two-Hearted River'. After the memories of a lost friendship threaten to become more distressing, Nick reminds himself of the need to do so: 'Nick drank the coffee, the coffee according to Hopkins. The coffee was bitter. Nick laughed. It made a good ending to the story. His mind was starting to work. He knew he could choke it because he was tired enough.' (IOT, NAS, 'Big Two-Hearted River', 187)

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[104] James B. Colvert, 'Ernest Hemingway's Morality in Action', in *American Literature*, 27 (1955), 379
[105] Graves and Jason (2001), p. 117f

Even by thinking carefully, Nick cannot find any meaning in the world of men, so he turns to nature to fill that void. It is there, instinctively, that he looks for meaning, order, balance and purpose. If there is something reliable in the world, that Nick finds in nature. Because of what he has seen in the war, Nick gains a stronger sense of the sacredness of life: he goes to nature to fish, that much is true, but he displays a great respect for living creatures, like the trout he is fishing. When handling them and returning them to the cool river because he does not want to catch more than he needs, he wets his hands, otherwise a fungus would attack the part where the trouts' delicate mucus had been disturbed; the idea is that life must be taken care of: 'Years before when he had fished crowded streams, with fly fishermen ahead of him and behind him, Nick had again and again come on dead trout, furry with white fungus, drifted against a rock, or floating belly up in some pool.' (NAS, 'Big Two-Hearted River', 192)

Nick rediscovers his own ability to live in the woods, and he promises to write truly about life and war, almost thankful, in a way, for not having died in combat. Hemingway's characteristic pessimism is put aside, if only for a brief moment, and that happens through a kind of vitalist attitude. Yet the shadow always lurks near, as Nick sees in the swamp by his campsite. The swamp, in fact, can be seen as his fear of his own unconscious — and not so unconscious — fears.

During the entire fictional action of 'Big Two-Hearted River', Nick's behaviour is made of careful, well-thought and dignified actions. If one looks at the theme of cleansing in the whole story, it is possible to look at Nick's demeanour as some kind of ritual to recover the balance and the self-control that he had lost. All mention of war is omitted, but the sense of conflict, of tension, especially *in* Nick, is ever-present. Nick achieves some degree of self-control in the simplicity of a routine that consists of making his bed or cooking his food. He immerses himself in the physical details so that there is no need to think. His conduct, furthermore, has something therapeutic to it: 'At every other point Nick becomes little other than a recording consciousness, carefully choking off thoughts and memories that would force him to become aware of himself.'[106] Death is the ultimate and unavoidable reality of life, death is a constant, as Nick has seen. The burned woods at the beginning of the story and the swamp are there to remind him of that. He can only face the shadow acting with dignity, even in the smallest and most insignificant gestures.

Hemingway's vision of death, the constant presence of death throughout his fictional work, is, like Nick's attitude towards life, related more to boldness than to frailty. As a writer, Hemingway is considered a realist, so he too accepts death as an undeniable reality of life.[107] The swamp, dead nature, surrounds Nick,

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[106] Strychacz (1989), 254

[107] To face the fact of death is as necessary for Hemingway as facing any other aspect of life. Writing about the people of Castilla in *Death in the Afternoon*, the narrator Hemingway admires them, for they 'know death is the inescapable reality, the one thing man may be sure of [...]. They think a great deal about death.' See Hemingway (1977), p. 234.

and he is aware of this. Like Hans Castorp's, Nick's heart knows death, even though death has no power over his thoughts. In the light of Jungian thought, though, the fact that Nick never goes into the swamp symbolically reveals his refusal to go into the depths of his own self. Nick is not a denier of death, he too knows it and does not let it rule over his mind, but, even accepting its inevitability, he nevertheless suffers tremendously because of the very existence of death, and in that he is very unlike Hans. But, in Hemingway's writing, it is still better to live accepting death's existence, as Nick does, than to simply surrender to it, like the old boxer Ole Andreson and the Amerindian father do.

At the end of 'Big Two-Hearted River', Nick does anticipate 'fish[ing] the swamp', which can be seen as an intention of, in the future, facing his fears, his shadow. (NAS, 'Big Two-Hearted River', 199) But his actions, as Strychacz notes, significant as they are 'on an analogical level, they cannot fashion a self because Nick constantly defers the self-awareness that would make them psychologically potent'.[108] His posture is alien to Hans's in *Der Zauberberg*, in that self-awareness is not seen as absolutely necessary, there is a key difference between Nick's and Hans's growth.

Nick's detachment is a strategy of self-protection: he does not deliberately attempt to know the shadow of his psyche, in what Robert Evans sees as a 'persistent refusal to explore that one area of his being where he might encounter

[108] Strychacz (1989), 254

himself in his most secret and terrifying terms'.[109] In Jungian terms, that is self-evident: rejecting a way similar to the one Hans Castorp chose, Nick's becomes a option of suffering. It is not by not thinking about death that it becomes absent, in fact the tension it causes might be even more evident. By refusing not to try and recognise the shadow, Nick cannot solve that tension, and that is what leads to suffering.

Faulkner, Hemingway's contemporary, once famously said that between nothing and the experience of pain, he would choose pain. Nick too chooses pain and that choice, for it is a choice of stoicism, despite having different results from Hans's attitude towards death, is none the less a non-nihilistic choice. The choice of pain and suffering is in itself an ethical choice, in that it escapes what Hemingway called the *nada*, the void, because, as Nick had learned from a young age, life is intrinsically connected with pain. Death is not seen in the way that Hans saw it, that is, as having an alluring side to it, it is rather an experience of suffering, because man has a foreknowledge of it in his own life. Nick too prepares himself for death, but, acknowledging it, he simply chooses not to think about it, he chooses to keep thoughts of it at bay; even if this means that he cannot fully come to terms with it, such is Nick's choice.

This might not be altogether surprising, as the style of writing of 'Big Two-Hearted River' depicts Hemingway at his best, one in which there is, after

[109] Evans (1966), 167

all, as Alfred Kazin says, a 'mental warding off of death' in that very same style.[110] The way in which Nick manages to get hold of himself and of his disturbed psyche — he even sleeps in total darkness, something which had previously frightened him — through means of his controlled behaviour is in fact reflected in the restrained literary style: it is, as in *Der Zauberberg*, an answer to death by form. Hemingway's original intention had been to write about war without making any mention of it, thus the prose style had to be extremely careful and composed. The final result is that 'Big Two-Hearted River' communicates by means of implication rather than by statement, and the story has consequently puzzled many a reader: unlike much of Hemingway's shorter fiction, 'Big Two-Hearted River' is therefore very open to interpretation, and consequently to critical controversy.

Nick's mindfulness and watchfulness towards himself and the surrounding environment leads to an idea that is nevertheless shared by many critics:

> The extraordinary replacement of dramatic complexity by a successiveness of words that is the immediate physical experience, the curtailing of everything to the handling of things, the getting on top of difficulties. All these identify obsessive patterning of the smallest experience with the deliberate effort it takes to keep alive.[111]

Hemingway's severe modernist writing aesthetic is related to the belief that both consciousness and life can be clarified through the right rendering of

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[110] Alfred Kazin, *Bright Book of Life* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly, 1973), p. 5
[111] Ibid., p. 11

words, so, in this case, his *mots justes* describe the way in which Nick cleanses his own troubled self. That is the way of discipline, a discipline, again, that Nick learned was necessary since an early age, and that he applied even in the most trivial happenings of life: 'The water tasted like rotten eggs because these were mineral springs and Nick and his sister used to drink from them as a matter of discipline.' (NAS, 'The Last Good Country', 76) The order on the written page, at the surface of the spatial experience of reading reveals something else: 'Down under, in short, the close reader finds a carefully determined order of virtue and simplicity which goes far towards explaining from below the oddly satisfying effect of the surface story.'[112]

It takes discipline to keep death at bay, and this stands for Nick's answer to the shadow of the psyche and that also exists in life. As Baker puts it, Nick's answer to the chaos of existence is an answer of virtue, and this disciplined virtue is Nick's refuge against the *nada*. Generally, and for his relation with the code of conduct that many of Hemingway's fictional characters display, Nick can be seen as the beginning of what critics have come to call the 'code hero', a recurring figure in Hemingway's fiction. Instead of embracing defeat, the code hero lives according to a very personal code of honour.

Few definitions sum up this code better than old Santiago's well-known assumption in *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) that a man can be destroyed but

[112] Baker (1956), p. 126

not defeated.[113] None the less, this is an axiom that can be seen in Hemingway's earlier prose, even in Nick's stories, although this version of the code is to some extent still undeveloped. And yet this spirit of discipline and endurance exists even side by side with the assurance that, most probably, winner takes nothing. Using another well-known definition of Hemingway, the code hero exhibits 'grace under pressure' as an autonomous human being, testing the conclusions he has reached about conduct against the tests of practical living, if necessary to the ultimate test of violence and death, and this despite the ultimate victory of death: 'A marked "capacity for life", a full acceptance and love of the world, is always a driving motive with the Hemingway hero. It grows even stronger with Hemingway's work through the nineteen-thirties. Yet Nick Adams has it.'[114]

The code is the feature of Hemingway's work which is most closely associated with manhood, yet, interestingly enough, in 'Big Two-Hearted River', where Nick's virtue represents his initiation into this code, there is a reserve in his behaviour that stands against customary notions of masculinity, and especially against simplistic visions of Hemingway's concept of manhood, those that see the Hemingway hero, of which Nick is the first example, as nothing 'but a swaggering boor' whose hairy-chested masculinity is expressed in 'belligerent virile actions'.[115]

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[113] See Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea* (London: Book Club Associates, 1972), p. 96.
[114] Baker (1956), p. 254
[115] Colvert (1955), 384

However, and as seen before, Nick's rejection of his friends' attempts to initiate him into toughness, as well as his separate peace and reclusion in 'Big Two-Hearted River', his deliberate avoidance of conflict, challenge these views, the code's stoical aspect of withdrawal actually denies these views. Nick's reclusiveness in this story confirms earlier tendencies, as well as his ultimate vision of manhood and of courage, which is not always boisterous, and many times actually lies in the avoidance of conflict — even with his own unconscious shadow, as has been seen. So maybe Hemingway's concept of manhood should be seen differently, consisting of a courage that can actually shy away from confrontation. It could just be that Hemingway's code, and the code hero, are not yet completed, perfected, but what these ideas go against are traditional notions of Hemingway's concept of masculinity. Yet, in all honesty, Nick's manhood, far from being boisterous, is all too human, and not Hemingway's manhood in the sense that many critics have come to see it. As a character, Nick is, after all, much more intricate, much more complex, than that.

None the less, the Nick Adams who survives the violence of the First World War becomes very different from an individual who has never experienced such violence. Having seen life's cruelty, Nick must find a different outlook on it, and the code is that refocusing of vision, as it were. In a way, he already knew that was necessary. In 'Indian Camp', his father had already told him that screams were not all that important, as he disciplined himself to help the pregnant woman, discipline being a part of the code. Yet the doctor admits to his

son that dying might sometimes be easier than living, though, a stance that finds full expression in his own suicide. Complete rejection of the suffering that is ever-present in life — like his father's embracing of the *nada* — cannot be fit into the code, so if the previous circumstances of Nick's life are seen in this way, it is understandable that he needed to finish his code of conduct, so to speak, by actually observing living examples of the code.

The major of 'In Another Country' is especially relevant to Nick's shaping of a code of conduct, as the major shows Nick that iron reserve is the only answer to desperation. Constantly fighting back tears for his dead wife, he loses control and he almost shouts to Nick, but he returns to the hospital the next day impeccably dressed in his uniform, with a black mourning band on his sleeve, to, Sisyphus-like, take the useless treatment for his injured hand. He uses military discipline to fight his desperation, so, despite his powerless anger, directly connected to his feeling of utter powerlessness, the major reasserts himself by doing what is there to be done, right (or should one say inevitable) action at the right time. Without complaining, he shows Nick that self-control can conceal rage and sorrow, he shows him that there is 'a kind of stoic endurance far on the other side of bravery', the nobility of someone who does not yield.[116]

[116] Cleanth Brooks, *The Hidden God: Studies in Hemingway, Faulkner, Yeats, Eliot and Warren* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 12 Flora furthermore considers that the way in which Nick understands the major's plight is also representative of his own growth: 'He [Nick] could feel for Ole Andreson, but he thought of him only as he affected Nick himself. [...] Now Nick is thinking about the major and the major's loss.' See Flora (1982), p. 143. Clearly there is a gain in empathy in Nick's view of the world.

The code is composed of a strict set of rules, one that can almost be described as almost religious, or even ascetic, and these rules allow for Hemingway's characters to live in the face of the bleakness of life. The code is based on stoicism, withdrawal and suffering, which are seen as ultimately leading to honesty, to humility and to character. It might be that man always loses, yet what should be important for him is knowing how to conduct himself, even, if that be the case, whilst he is losing:

> [The code hero] represents a code according to which the hero, if he could attain it, would be able to live properly in the world of violence, disorder, and misery to which he had been introduced and which he inhabits. The code hero, then, offers up and exemplifies certain principles of honor, courage and endurance.[117]

Ethically, this view is not a means to get to something, but rather an end in itself, and this is the greatest possible respect for the complexities of life.

The experiences of Nick's childhood, and especially his experiences of war, created in him an anxiety, a contact with the shadow, that could have easily led into neurosis and, in fact, almost did. However, his acknowledgement of death and of its relation to the human condition leads to the code. Grace under pressure can only be achieved with that realisation, likewise through self-control, and ultimately through Nick's own art of writing (which, of course, has much to do with Hemingway's one).

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[117] Young (1959), p. 8

All these factors are related to Nick's ultimate positive growth and development. At the end of his stories, as Baker says, he is no different from many other American literary initiates of the beginning of the twentieth century. Experimenting in his boyhood and adolescence, and living close to nature, he goes to war and comes back home seriously affected by it, in a time of fragile peace; he subsequently marries and builds a family whilst honing his talent as a writer.[118]

After 'Big Two-Hearted River', Nick's initiation is somehow finished: the beginnings of the code were in themselves the achievement of confirmation. Despite the fact that he is still confronted with several features of otherness, Nick is now treated narratively as an adult — especially in Young's 'Company of Two' chapter —, albeit a young adult who is acquiring increasing responsibility because of marriage and parenthood. In the last tales of *The Nick Adams Stories* Nick is seen as enjoying all the little pleasures of life, fishing, skiing, swimming, in a company of two with his son, and overall in a much healthier condition than before. This affirmative, often hedonistic attitude is not altogether that strange, after all, in Hemingway's fiction overall, and makes sense, as Linda Wagner-Martin notes, when seen against the spirit of the time: 'To a culture jaundiced

[118] See Baker (1956), p. 131f.

after the "war to end all wars" had succeeded only in decimating humankind, the search for pleasure had credibility.'[119]

This increase in physical activity, none the less, also confirms at length that activity triumphs over thought: thought is always the wound, never the physician: 'Nick felt happy. He felt he had left everything behind, the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs.' (NAS, 'Big Two-Hearted River', 179) To think too much about life's complexities is ultimately to think too much about death, so it is better not to carry it too far. Nick only recovers from his war experiences because he gained a measure of toughness, a courage of his own, and as Lawrence said, that is the essential American soul, one that is hard, isolated and stoic.[120] And at least some of this holds true for Nick Adams.

'Fathers and Sons' is the story that ends *The Nick Adams Stories*. And death, almost inevitably, it can be said, again plays a major role in it. But here it is seen as a symbol of continuity, proving that 'death is for Hemingway somewhere near the center of life'.[121] Death and life are linked in, and in that rests the continuity, just as it did in the case of Hans Castorp's baptismal bowl. Recalling his father and several episodes of his past, this short story is a

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[119] Linda Wagner-Martin (ed.) 'Introduction' to *A Historical Guide to Ernest Hemingway* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 4. Regarding Nick's life, Flora furthermore agrees that a strong motif of *The Nick Adams Stories* 'is the proper pursuit of pleasure. Nick had decided long ago that his father had missed out on a lot of things and that he meant his own life to be different'. See Flora (1982), p. 201.

[120] See D. H. Lawrence, 'Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Novels', in *Studies in Classic American Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1964), p. 59.

[121] Baker (1956), p. 152

testimony of how far Nick has come since 'Now I Lay Me' and 'Big Two-Hearted River'. He does not have to 'choke' anything, as he has come to terms with his past and with the act of remembering, something one can attribute to his acquiring of responsibility, to the fact that Nick, now thirty-eight and a father, accordingly gains a much more sympathetic view of what his own father went through. Perhaps Nick did fish the swamp.

In 'Fathers and Sons', generations of the Adamses are compressed, and seen in a line: 'Each father is near his son, each son is near his father.'[122] In this aspect, and for once, death is not seen in an altogether negative way, it must not be immediately dismissed, as it is seen as representing permanence, stability, a link between family members that makes all of them part of a larger whole. The reader is invited to consider why Nick's vision of death has changed, and discover that his vision can be seen as not lying very far from Hans Castorp's. In a heartless world where death is always imminent, this identification becomes all the more important. The assumption of fatherhood and of his status as family man is the touchstone of Nick's growth. In 'Cross-Country Snow' (IOT), his fear of his wife's pregnancy saw him attempt to escape the demands put upon him by upcoming paternity by taking physical activity, as Steven K. Hoffman notes, 'to the level of absolute value'; none the less, the story 'ends with clarified vision,

[122] Ibid., p. 134

and Nick does come to terms with the inevitable external demands upon him', and that is Nick's honest self-evaluation all over again.[123]

Identification within a family becomes a characteristic of *The Nick Adams Stories* which does not follow from the other American narratives of initiation considered here. The initiate Nick Adams thus gains a biography, a different kind of identity, he is not a son of nature like Huck Finn, an undefined protagonist like Crane's Henry Fleming, or an episodic one like Anderson's George Willard. The family, mainly the male contact between father and son, it must be said — in the tradition of the theme of masculinity which is never far from any discussion about American initiation —, is seen as the one chance the individual has of experiencing some sort of meaningful shared existence, a place where the protagonist does not have to deal with life's otherness, but rather finds identification within his own.

Society is still regarded as heartless, ultimately meaningless, as in all of the American examples of narratives of initiation considered in this thesis, hence it is the family that offers a kind of society. So if the early sum of his experiences leaned strongly towards victimisation, the older Nick ultimately finds, at the end of his initiation, when he is ready for adulthood, some sort of confirmation through life, which is what accompanies him until the end of his stories.

[123] Hoffman, in Bloom (1985), p. 180

4. The two faces of time and the necessity for action in *Der Zauberberg*

> Only through time time is conquered.
> T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

As one has come to expect from most *Bildungsromane*, one of the greatest points of dissent among critics in what concerns the study of *Der Zauberberg* is to what extent the *Bildungsideal* is reached. This dissension is directly related to the ending of the novel, when Hans interrupts his seven-year sleep to join the hell of the First World War, thus (presumably) leaving his *Bildungsprozeß* behind and in ruins. His survival is uncertain at the time the narrative ends.

According to the historical setting in which Hans's story takes place, that is, in the beginning of the twentieth century, for him to find practical accommodation in the world according to the tenets of the *Bildungsroman* was certainly an unfeasible task: war does not allow it. The concern with the practical accommodation of the *Bildungsheld* is the concluding objective of the *Bildungsroman*; however, and as I mentioned while discussing the beginnings of the genre, the world of the twentieth century is somehow less optimistic than the eighteenth-century world in which the *Bildungsroman* originated.

The fact that Hans goes back to the flatlands and presumably (almost certainly, I think) shares the fate of many other young Europeans of his generation is frequently seen as a sign of great pessimism, of a somewhat nihilistic end to the novel, the point behind it being that the "real" world provides

little chance of a peaceful reconciliation with the self, however upright and enlightened the protagonist may be.[124]

It can be said that this is a somewhat uncharacteristic view of Thomas Mann: 'To be sure, fighting in a war whose causes he largely does not understand is not a very glorious end to Hans's education, but thus he is sharing the fate of a whole European generation. On the other hand, he has sensed, however vaguely, the humanistic significance of his vision in the snow.'[125] The latter part of Hatfield's quotation, none the less, confirms that Hans did indeed have an intuition of a new humanity before being swallowed up without trace by the circumstances of war in Europe, and this is a position many a critic shares. If the world denies the *Grundbegriffe*, the assumption is that they exist nevertheless.

Without being an overtly optimistic novel, *Der Zauberberg* does, in my view, reveal a certain optimism, thus meeting a requirement of the *Bildungsroman* genre. Mann is mostly a moral writer — again *Der Tod in Venedig* serves as a good example of his moral viewpoints — and returning to the world is absolutely necessary for Hans to truly assert himself as a moral and ethical being. Near the end of the novel, despite the *Bildungsprozeß* he was submitted to, despite all the visions he has and all the insights he gains, Hans

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[124] The same point can be made about other modern *Bildungsromane*. In *Das Glasperlenspiel*, the protagonist — who spent most of his life isolated from the world — finds death shortly upon returning to society as well, which can also be seen quite symbolically.
[125] Hatfield (1979), p. 38

eventually falls prey to the eternity of abandonment he finds in the magic mountain. Near the end he lives in negative freedom, utterly disengaged, one might almost say psychologically dead, just waiting for someone or something to remove him from his *ennui*. In the closing stages of the narrative, Hans seems like another piece of furniture of the sanatorium. He is practically ignored by the physicians, as he had been ignored in his childhood by his teacher after failing a class at school. His watch is broken and he has lost all sense of time. All his links with the flatlands are severed, he corresponds with no one and, even in Davos, his social life is almost non-existent; he is even relegated to the *schlechter Russentisch*, the bad Russian table: 'No longer a citizen of the Western world, he might have sat by the Ganges with Siddartha, or better, have joined the other shades in Hades.'[126]

The final years of Hans Castorp in the magic mountain have no temporal structure. Like eternal snow, *ewiger Schnee*, the perpetual sameness of his life carries on, but eternity gradually loses its allure for him. Historical time is what eventually catches up with him, but for the narrator, it seems better thus, because without real time there is no real life: 'Das Leben ohne Zeit, das sorg- und hoffnungslose Leben, das Leben als stagnierende betriebsame Liederlichkeit, das tote Leben.' (ZB, 863)

[126] Hatfield (1979), p. 64

For Settembrini, Hans's first and true mentor, time imbued life with value, thus making existence pregnant with possibilities, as Mann himself said: 'What I believe, what I value most, is transitoriness. But is not transitoriness — the perishableness of life — something very sad? No! It is the very soul of existence. It imparts value, dignity, interest to life.'[127] Potentially, at least, time is seen as the most useful gift. Time is one of the most distinctive aspects of *Der Zauberberg*. As I mentioned before, this novel is a *Zeitroman*, and it is so in a double sense. In the sense of the pure nature of time, one can say that time is scrutinised, and disagreeing views of it and different ways to measure it separate the flatlands and the magic mountain as much as anything else:

> From the beginning to the end of the novel, this effacing of chronological time is clearly underscored by the contrast between 'those up here', acclimatized to this beyond-time, and 'those down below' — those of the flatland — whose occupations follow the rhythm of the calendar and of clocks.[128]

The magic mountain works with inverted concepts. Even many of the natural mechanisms used to separate time in the flatlands, like the seasons, are turned upside down "up there": in Davos, it snows in August and it is hot in December. Furthermore, the first meeting between Hans and his cousin in the mountain tells of Joachim's attempts to clarify to his *neulich* arrived guest the different nature of time in Davos, one that has loose standards of measurement: '"Die springen hier um mit der menschlichen Zeit, das glaubst du gar nicht. Drei

[127] Thomas Mann, *This I believe*, ed. Edward P. Morgan (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), p. 156
[128] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin et al. (London: University of Chicago, 1985), 2, 112

Wochen sind wie ein Tag vor ihnen. Du wirst schon sehen. Du wirst das alles noch lernen", sagte er und setzte hinzu: "Man ändert hier seine Begriffe".' (ZB, 16)

By this time, the two cousins just have different notions of time. One must continue to bear in mind that Hans, when he arrived for his originally intended three-week visit, was a young man strongly linked to the bourgeois mentality of his hometown, Hamburg. And, as has already been mentioned, he totally agrees with the ways of the flatlands, as he repeatedly points out to Joachim that he is not "one of them". Hans sternly affirms himself as a bourgeois engineer, one who does not dream of questioning his life down in the flatlands.

Yet the bonds Hans had in the flatlands were, for the most part, very fragile. As was already mentioned, his choices in life had hardly ever been his own. As the object of a *Bildungsprozeß*, however, Hans possesses the hidden alchemical talents of the *Bildungsheld*. Upon arriving at the mountain, Hans suffers a quickening, so to speak: his talents are accelerated, as it is not only sickness that is stimulated by the clean, fresh air of the magic mountain. From the beginning, Hans is likely to adopt the views of those living in the mountain, despite his initial reluctance, his *joli-bourgeois-à-la-petite-tache-humide*-reluctance. Hans will indeed do so, as he will live by the same patterns of time that so sicken the soldier Ziemssen.

Shortly after his arrival, Joachim uses the word 'neulich', to the perplexity of Hans, to refer to an eight-week span. Later on, in one of his digressions — *Regierungen* — about the astronomical practices of ancient people, Hans uses the same word to describe a period comprising several centuries, to the total bewilderment of Joachim:

> 'Aber wenn ich so liege und mir die Planeten besehe, dann werden die dreitausend Jahre auch zu "neulich", und ich denke intim an die Chaldäer, die sie auch sahen und sich ihren Vers darauf machten, und das ist die Menschheit'.
> 'Na, gut; du hast ja großzügige Einwürfe in deinem Kopf'. (ZB, 509)

By now, Hans has become completely assimilated to the existing culture of Davos, and he slowly yields to the atmosphere of the magic mountain, growing more and more indifferent to the passage of time. His time becomes not objective time, but time filtered by his own subjective insight, it is psychological time.

In the world he knew, in the flatlands, living in another time order, Hans Castorp would be just as good as what he could eventually accomplish and achieve. He would not be endowed with intrinsic value and would have had a purely instrumental relationship with time. Now Hans *feels* time, and as a result he realises that all standardised divisions of it are senseless. '"Aber welches ist denn unser Zeitorgan?"' (ZB, 95) — which organ does the individual use to measure time —, he asks, and the answer is none. The hands of the clock are just a convention, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes and seconds are but conventions, as valid to measure time and with as much substance as the daily

meal times, or Dr. Krokowski's fortnightly conferences, or the bimonthly concerts. The conventional clock is seen as being as accurate as the clock of habit, that is saying that none of them is, because man and man only divides time: 'Die Zeit hat in Wirklichkeit keine Einschnitte, es gibt kein Gewitter oder Drommetengetön beim Beginn eines neuen Monats oder Jahres, und selbst bei dem eines neuen Säkulums sind es nur wir Menschen, die schießen und läuten.' (ZB, 313)

When he discovers that he is ill, Hans steps out of time, almost existing outside physical laws, as if he is living from that moment onwards in a kind of jar, like the ones he had at home, hermetically sealed. Time becomes continuous for him, because he gradually stops measuring it, in a process which is over long before he breaks his watch in the closing stages of the narrative: 'It is in a Schopenhauerian eternity or a Wagnerian nirvana that Hans loses himself.'[129]

To him, days just seem to repeat themselves endlessly now. He had experienced this very same feeling on one of the first occasions he went to the restaurant of the sanatorium in company of his cousin, thinking that no period of time between the meals had actually occurred, because it was as if none of the guests had actually left their specific places at the tables. When Hans is ill in bed, he feels it is the same day repeating itself over and over again. Time assumes, for

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[129] Margaret Church, *Time and Reality: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 5th ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 147

Hans Castorp, the state of a permanent 'now', and the frequent use of certain leitmotifs in the narrative serves this very purpose: his grandfather's shaking of the head, Settembrini's peculiar trousers, Přibislav's pencil, and so on. The use of the pencil leitmotif, for instance, allows Hans to live simultaneously in two different times, in a time where Přibislav is Clawdia and Clawdia is Přibislav: 'Je t'ai tutoyée de tout temps et je te tutoierai éternellement.' (ZB, 465) In such moments, Hans *is* completely outside of time, as if one of the hermetically sealed "jars of his past" had suddenly been opened.

It is Nietzsche's *ewige Wiederkehr* entirely: if the cycles of the same human situation repeat themselves, then all time is eternally present. This is the reason why the story of Hans Castorp, as a myth almost, is much older than its age, much older than the time in which it occurs, it is as it always was and as it always will be, as the narrator says: 'Sie [die Geschichte] ist viel älter als ihre Jahre, ihre Betagtheit ist nicht nach Tagen, das Alter, das auf ihr liegt, nicht nach Sonnenumläufen zu berechnen.' (ZB, 9) There are two ways of viewing Hans's movement from time to timelessness, as *Der Zauberberg*'s norm, again, always involves seems this rather Heraclitian conflict and connection of contraries. This game of opposites is constant, what is given in one line is taken away in another, each character has its opposite, each thesis its antithesis.

Hans's family had died with his grandfather, at least that *continuum* represented by the baptismal bowl, but the reassurance that all time is eternally

present gives Hans a whole new sense of continuity. According to existentialist views, his time is human time, it is meaningful time, because it is free from the artificial distinctions of the hands of the clock, and Hans becomes time's creator rather than its creature. That inner time, that subjective time experienced only by him is not at all inferior to any other kind of time, religious or not. In fact, it is eternity itself.

However, when Hans finds himself incapable of returning to the flatlands with his cousin, who decided to leave despite Behrens's objections, Hans is forced to recognise that he is no longer capable of going back by himself:

> Und soviel war loyalerweise zuzugeben, daß eine Hand ihm geboten war, jetzt, wo das Unmögliche vielleicht noch nicht ganz so unmöglich war, wie es später sein würde, — eine Stütze und Führung für ihn, durch Joachims wilde Abreise, auf dem Wege ins Flachland, den er von sich aus in Ewigkeit nie zurückfinden würde. (ZB, 576)

Hans is cleared to go by the physicians, he has apparently nothing more to do in the mountain, but his inability to leave shows that eternity too is Janus-like, and one of its faces is not as inviting as the other. The immovable character of eternity actually succeeds in separating Hans Castorp from life. He is like an opium-eater living a seven-year dream.

Hans's clock now has the hands of eternity, it is cleansed of artificial distinctions, as even the vision he has in the snow, the supreme *Steigerung* of the novel and the revelation of a lifetime, takes place outside of time, in a dream.

Ever since the chapter 'Freiheit', Hans is free from time boundaries, seven weeks after he arrived. If he still notices time then, that changes in 'Walpurgisnacht', when he completes his first seven months in the magic mountain: 'Von da an wird so deutlich nicht mehr gezählt.'[130] And his inner state fluctuates, as all these liberations are reflected by his fever chart. And in the alchemical toying with the number seven — the seven metals, the seven days, the seven planets —, the thunderbolt of war sets him free seven years after he arrives. Hans leaves the tempting and magic quietude of the mountain, but he does so to act ethically upon the world, because that is what ultimately defines man. The war in the flatlands may have death marching before it, but as Hans learned, death too can have no dominion. In acting this way, Hans consummates his status as a true *Bildungsheld*, leaving behind his stagnant existence.

Mann once said that in the end, all truths are time truths, and Hans has to abandon the unpractical — to put it mildly — life of the magic mountain to test his own subjective truth against the truths of the social world of the time.[131] The outcome of this clash is uncertain, yet what is clear is that Hans, carrying inside of him what he has learned in the magic mountain, goes back to the flatlands and by doing so replenishes his experiences in the mountain with value. Having achieved his clarification of consciousness, there was little more Hans could do. When he returns to the flatlands, Hans takes responsibility for and in the social

[130] Eckhard Heftrich, *Zauberbergmusik: Über Thomas Mann* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1975), p. 48

[131] Mann, 'Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen', in *Gesammelte Werke* (1960), 12, 516

world, even if he only goes back to defend his country's values. I will not try and evaluate the validity of Hans's specific, concrete reasons for joining the conflict. The First World War was thought at the time to be the war to end all wars, so the ideas of the age on this kind of conflict were perhaps different than they are today.

The narrator's view of the futility and chaos of war is all the narrative gives to the reader, and this, in the view of ethical criticism, is the overall stance on war in *Der Zauberberg*. What can also be perceived is that Hans takes responsibility and reinvents himself, as an ethical being, even when enlisting as a soldier. 'Auf den Bergen wohnt die Freiheit!' is what Hans says, but he learns that the other side of his freedom is inexcusable irresponsibility. (ZB, 530)

His departure might not seem logical, as it is intuitive and sudden.[132] And even if the values which Hans means to defend are questionable because they involve war and conflict, they definitely show that he became aware, by the end of his seven-year sleep, that he could not live alienated from the social world. He understands his obligations towards it: 'Castorp seems to be attempting to pay his debt to society, and Mann shows in this young man [...] not an alienated

[132] Hardin says that it is more reminiscent of Naphta than of Settembrini. See Hardin (1991), p. xxii. However, and regarding war, it cannot be overlooked that the Settembrini's position on international conflict is by no means a serene one. He accepts it under certain conditions — some very idiosyncratic and personal conditions, one must say —, as he recognises that change cannot sometimes be brought by the 'feet of the doves'. His opinion is that sometimes it takes the 'wings of the eagles' to bring it.

member of society but one willing to risk his life to defend what he perceives as its values.'[133]

Action can only take place in the world, because time makes all action possible, and action is the final goal of the *Bildungsheld.* Without action, the *Bildungsprozeß* loses its definite contours, its tension between potentiality and actuality, the deep ethical tension between freedom and responsibility. *Bildung* must be an interacting dynamic, not only a cerebral existence. The character of the Dutchman Mynheer Peeperkorn must be mentioned in this connection. Perhaps not such a cardinal figure as Settembrini or Naphta, this exaggerated Epicurean figure, this nature character, shows Hans the need to live life to the full. In his sensualism, his immense personality and strength to enjoy life reside examples for Hans to consider. Peeperkorn's will to life shows all the limits of Vitalism, but he is the most approximate example of the merging of life and spirit that Hans meets throughout the narrative: 'Das Körperliche geht ins Geistige über, und umgekehrt, und sind nicht zu unterscheiden, [...] aber die Wirkung ist da, das Dynamische, und wir werden in die Tasche gesteckt.' (ZB, 801) As Hans Castorp puts it, Peeperkorn shows personality, and the emphasis is rightly put on 'das Dynamische', on the dynamic, i.e. on activity of a less rational — cerebral, as Peeperkorn puts it — kind. The Dutchman's activity owes more to the sensual and to the intuitive.

[133] Hardin (1991), p. xxii

Persönlichkeit, it must be remembered, is one of the key concepts for *Bildung*, and Jung too considers its importance: 'Persönlichkeit ist höchste Verwirklichung der eingeborenen Eigenart des besonderen lebenden Wesen. Persönlichkeit ist die Tat des höchsten Lebenmutes, der absoluten Bejahung des individuell Seienden.'[134] It is no wonder, then, that Hans is fascinated by the Dutchman, despite the fact that they both covet the same woman. Hans admires him even in his death, because Peeperkorn kills himself despite — or because of — the colossal love he shows for life. But as the Dutchman explained to Hans when speaking about poisons, every poison contains in it chemicals that can cure or kill, thus containing life and death. And if one wants to live, one can nevertheless not deny death as being a part of life. This comes close, albeit in another form, to Hans's own conceptions, and such is the gift of personality.

As long as Hans is sealed in his jar, he is not asserting himself as an ethical being. Reflection about life's complexities should not divorce one from the actual process of living which, after all, makes all reflection possible in the first place. Action is also a predicament of life, of being alive, as day in, day out, the individual is forced to choose in which way he will act. So like Wilhelm Meister, Hans too learns that he has to be held accountable for others, because life and the social world, just like the world of ideas, consist of interaction. He must return, if he is capable of being moral, to what Ziolkowski calls the 'ethical

[134] Jung, 'Vom Werden der Persönlichkeit' (1972), 17, 195. See also Thomas R. Hinton, 'The Uses of Bildung"', in German Life and Letters, 30 (1976-77), 177.

arena of time'.[135] The right balance between action and reflection is another of the antinomies man must master, and that is the reason why in the closing stages of the narrative Hans's quietist, contemplative existence is being put into question.

The goal is humanism, and if the original *umanisti* were associated with qualities such as understanding and benevolence, they were also associated with more assertive ones, like fortitude and judgement. Consequently they could not be sedentary and isolated thinkers, but were of necessity participants in active existence. *Humanitas* called for a fine balance of action and contemplation, a balance born not of compromise but of complementarity. The tension between reflection and action is as present in *Der Zauberberg* as in other, earlier *Bildungsromane*. The attempt at answering what is the relation between acting and philosophising, living and speculating, between Being and *Geist* — what German Idealism called the union of individualism and universality — lies too at the heart of *Der Zauberberg*.

As Jung says, only reflection can lead to ethical conduct, but someone who remains caught up in the spirit does not live any more, s/he is crippled, as only the spirit lives. Only life can make pure spirit live, so both must coexist:

> Ein Geist, der den Menschen über alle Lebensmöglichkeit hinausreißt, und nur Erfüllung in sich selbst sucht, ist ein Irrgeist [...]. Leben und Geist sind zwei Mächte, oder Notwendigkeiten, zwischen die der Mensch

[135] Ziolkowski (1969), p. 214

> hineingestellt ist. Der Geist gibt seinem Leben Sinn und die Möglichkeit größter Entfaltung. Das Leben aber ist dem Geiste unerläßlich, denn seine Wahrheit ist nichts, wenn sie nicht leben kann.[136]

In the light of Jungian analytic psychology, failure to return to everyday life would mean that Hans had failed to resist the dark allure of the unconscious. As a *Bildungsheld* looking for self-awareness, Hans broke free of the security of the mediocre — emphatically flat — flatlands in which he lived in the first place, and went to the dangerous and seductive new world of the magic mountain. But in order for the journey to be complete, he has again to break free of this new sphere and return to his previous one. The new world is enticing, and leaving it is harder than leaving home, but living totally for the unconscious is not fully living at all.

This is Jung's insight into the unconscious psyche, and an accurate analogy with the tenets of the *Bildungsideal*. So when Hans leaves, learning, as seen before, how to balance conscious and unconscious, the light and the shadow, he truly is a Jungian hero, so to speak, seeking to live with his unconscious and not seeking control over it. If the world, with all its actual problems, in this case the exploding chaos of war, does not allow Hans to show or even to maintain his more discerning psyche, this does not diminish his worth. Personality might be sometimes unattainable in face of the world, but

[136] Jung, 'Geist und Leben', in *Die Dynamik des Unbewussten*, ed. Lilly Jung-Merker et al. (Zurich and Stuttgart: Rascher, 1967), 8, 383

unattainability, says Jung, is no argument against the ideal.[137] Many literary critics consider the ideal of practical accommodation with society the most marginal characteristic, as it were, of the *Bildungsroman* genre.[138] In this light, reaching that is not everything, then, what is important is knowing that at least there is a goal to be reached, a new vision of man is possible: pure striving too is important. *Der Zauberberg* certainly agrees with this conception of the narrative of self-cultivation, and if Mann is pre-eminently a moral writer, it cannot be forgotten that the *Bildungsroman* is there also for the benefit of the reader.

When discussing myth as universal symbol in the works of Thomas Mann, Howard Nemerov compared Hans Castorp to the figure of the quester-hero searching for the Holy Grail.[139] This comparison is known to have delighted Mann and it is said that to some extent it even influenced Mann's view on his own novel (after all, Mann also wrote extensive criticism on his own books).[140] Mann wrote of Hans as pointing the way towards a new humanity, and thus Hans Castorp gains the status of what Jung has frequently called the 'redeemer personality'. This would be even more true if Hans did indeed die at the end of the narrative. That could be seen, to some extent, as being something of a catharsis, as Hans would share the fate of other figures in literature whose death

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[137] See Jung, 'Vom Werden der Persönlichkeit' (1972), p. 196.
[138] Minden, in Schellinger (1998), 1, 119
[139] See Howard Nemerov, *The Quester-Hero: Myth as Universal Symbol in the Works of Thomas Mann* (Harvard: n. pub., 1940).
[140] See Hatfield (1979), p. 37.

had the same effect.[141] If Hans dies, he does so in a kind of sacrificial manner, in what reinforces his position as a redeemer, and also constitutes his own redemption, as he becomes both the saviour and the saved: 'Hans's ultimate exit from this surrogate "hell" into the actual hell of history upon the eruption of the First World War symbolizes [...] a profound redemptive change.'[142]

An individual with such a personality does not have a perfectly uniform psyche, as that may be nothing but a chimera, yet it is able to balance its light and dark side. To Jung, an individual who achieves what the fictional character Hans Castorp does lights a beacon to illuminate the path of others, not in any religious sense, but in a human one. He is that one individual who manages to extricate himself from the fatal identity with the social psyche: 'Nicht vergebens ist es gerade unsere Zeit, die nach der erlösenden Persönlichkeit ruft, das heißt nach dem, der sich von der unentrinnbaren Kollektivitätsmacht unterscheidet und damit wenigstens seelisch sich befreit.'[143] In the light of Jungian analytic psychology, this is exactly what Hans does, knowing himself to the largest extent possible. The fact that the world is not in agreement with that is unfortunate, to say the least, but the narrative stresses more than once that the world sometimes leaves little room for spiritual values and intellectual discussion. The ideal of

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[141] The one that comes to mind immediately is Hamlet, who dies when he is ready to become a great king, that being the true tragedy of his story. Hamlet matures, and when he is capable of acting in a more clarified way, after solving his own inner conflicts, he is deprived of that very fulfilment. An analogy can be made with Hans's inability to act, then, but the motif of sacrifice has in itself a positive value, too, being *in potentia* a kind of apotheosis.

[142] Gillespie, in Hardin (1991), p. 374

[143] Jung, 'Vom Werden der Persönlichkeit' (1972), 17, 202

high spiritual striving is, in a way, doomed to clash with materialist and earth-bound factors. So until man is self-reflective enough and resolves his own inner contradictions to make the "Grail" distinct, the latter will remain a secret: 'Der Gral ist ein Geheimnis, aber auch die Humanität ist das. Denn der Mensch selbst ist ein Geheimnis.'[144]

Despite the fact that it sometimes might be seen as a distant reflection, the magic mountain is fictionally constructed as a reflection of the world, and it too does not escape the shadow that hovers over Europe and leads to the First World War. The outbreak of random violence, culminating in the duel between Naphta and Settembrini, defines to Hans a reality with which the *Bildungsheld* must also learn to cope, the ultimate domination of man's non-enlightened passions: 'Und er [Hans] begriff mit Grauen, daß am Ende aller Dinge nur das Körperliche blieb, die Nägel, die Zähne.' (ZB, 963) Human affairs never seem to resolve themselves in profitable, reasonable and collected discussion, but rather in fight and conflict — and that is, more than anything else, the 'realistic tic' of *Der Zauberberg*. The poison gas that was about to be released over Europe, and which had primarily erupted from the hearts and souls of the European, is brought by the winds of war to the magic mountain.

Hans Castorp lives in negative freedom by the end of the narrative, thus stressing the need for action, but the world does not allow for favourable activity.

[144] Mann (1960), 'Einführung in den Zauberberg', 11, 617

Despite their similarities, the magic mountain and the world disclose what they fundamentally stand for, the difference between idea and occurrence, as time and reality are enemies of the ideal. As Hatfield notes, 'the central paradox of the novel arises from the fact that its intellectual thrust is towards life, its historical thrust towards war'.[145] Whilst Hans finds in the mountain the freedom to grow intellectually and spiritually, the flatlands ultimately remain the same, a world imprisoned by time, space and causality:

> If Goethe's novel [*Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*] shows the evolution of an individual on lines qualifying him for practical membership of an ideal society in advance of contemporary reality, *The Magic Mountain* proceeds from the disintegration of bourgeois society and Hans Castorp is not lead to the social but to the metaphysical sphere.[146]

The *Bildungsroman*'s feature of interaction with reality does not come to a complete conclusion because of the historical setting. Nevertheless, the narrator points out that there is a way to fulfilment, and that only makes Hans's experiences all the more important. The universal character of the *Bildungsroman* is meant to show a path, but one that is not dependent on particular circumstances, such as the ones that face Hans in the flatlands. That is the seal of what is universal, and thus Hans's experiences survive, in a way, the acid test of reality. In the end, he is a victim of history, as were so many other Europeans of the time, but the narrator sees through that he leaves behind a kind

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[145] Hatfield (1979), p. 65

[146] Thomas (1963), p. 111. The narrator's comment on Hans Castorp's fate follows the same line: 'Abenteuer im Fleische und Geist, die deine Einfacheit steigerten, ließen dich im Geist überleben, was du im Fleische wohl kaum überleben sollst.' (ZB, 984)

of legacy, so to speak, and as Ziolkowski too notes, 'the fact that the novel ends with a question mark—both regarding Hans Castorp's fate in the war and regarding the possibility of love emerging from the death of battle—in no way disqualifies the vision of unity that underlies the total conception'.[147]

Hans's exposure to death, his ensuing acknowledgement of it without giving it any power over his self and his attitude towards life and love are all part of Hans's legacy, if one can speak of a legacy at all. All these idea(l)s point out to the future, represented in a truly human society in which love, respect and consideration among men arises from the constant awareness of the frailty and perishableness of life, of the threat of the dark fate that rises above it. Only through love can death be reckoned with, only then can life exist at its fullest. If only man understands it someday, seems to be what is there to be said.

When referring to *Der Zauberberg*, Mann too recognised that this redemption through love pointed to the future, as it was impossible to see in a world at war. The novel is only a signpost, "functioning" in the same way as Hans: 'Sein [Des Zauberbergs] Dienst ist Lebendienst, sein Wille Gesundheit, sein Ziel die Zukunft.'[148] So in the end, in a way, all that remains is a dream. Not a dream in the sense of a non-concrete reality, but a path, a representation of a possible and, if one trusts the narrative voice, a desirable future, a guiding ideal.

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[147] Ziolkowski (1969), p. 238
[148] Mann (1960), 'Vom Geist der Medizin', 11, 595

The "Grail" is found but it cannot be held for long by human hands. Hans sees it, in a way, in the snow, recovers it through music, but he can never keep it, because the truth of the unconscious, again following Jung, cannot be grasped intellectually: 'Man ist keineswegs immer im Besitz seiner Selbst, unser Selbstbewußtsein ist insofern schwach, als wir das Unsere nicht immer gegenwärtig beisammen haben. Nur in Augenblicken seltener Klarheit, Sammlung und Übersicht wissen wir wahrhaft von uns.'[149] A less cerebral, more instinctive, approach, as it is an approach through love, might be necessary, and this stress on the instinctive places Hans Castorp closer to Nick Adams than ever before. Such an idea might only reveal the conciliatory character of the *Bildungsroman* as a genre, but it also serves to illustrate that the modern *Bildungsheld* is more complex, and has to deal with a more complex reality that the protagonists of previous *Bildungsromane*,

If the "Grail" is only glimpsed at for a moment, that moment should nevertheless have the quality of time in the magic mountain and therefore be eternally present. If *Der Zauberberg* was an *Erziehungsroman* and had specific lessons to be learned, one could tentatively say that one of those lessons would be that there are no absolute assurances in life, only postulates; no intellectual exercises that completely seize the complexity of existence: the characters of

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[149] Ibid., 'Einführung in den Zauberberg', 614. Note, again, the connection of 'das Unsere' with Jung's conception of the collective unconscious.

Settembrini and Naphta illustrate this assumption all too well. There are no definite views, and maybe the irony of the novel also consists in that fact, after all the elevated discussions, quite simply, only the balancing of constant dualisms remains, only love remains. What is offered is perhaps less elaborate and infinitely more fragile, and is what Helmut Koopmann calls the epiphany of Goethe's heritage: 'Was bleibt? [...] Humanität, Mitte, Güte und Liebe.'[150] And one should always remember the extent to which Goethe influenced Mann's own conceptions.

5. Incorporating and overcoming Christian thought in a modern *Bildungsroman*

> It is the belief and not the god that counts.
> Wallace Stevens

In his more expanded role as a cultural critic, but also as a psychologist analysing the mental processes that led to the breakdown of European culture, and ultimately to the First World War, Jung frequently mentions the fall of the old ethical systems of the Western world. All faith in God was dissolved, consequently all confidence in man was shaken, and the old values eventually succumbed: 'Ja noch vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg zeigten sich die ersten Symptome der geistigen Wandlung Europas. Das mittelalterliche Weltbild zerfiel, und die dieser Welt übergeordnete metaphysische Autorität schwand dahin.'[151] There

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[150] Koopmann, in Sprecher (1995), p. 72
[151] Jung, 'Nach der Katastrophe' (1974), 10, 241

was a strong sense of a lack of God and a loss of religiosity — metaphysics had lost its prominence.

Many of the changes of the modern world are associated with the rise of science and of the so-called technological man. Industrialisation further led to the predominance of the middle class and to the gradual breakdown of old class structures based on hierarchy. The world was transformed by means of urbanisation, and the individual progressively lost touch, not only with it, but also with the spiritual world. According to J. Hillis Miller, this is a process related to the individual's alienation from the world, which causes a sense of 'inner nothingness'.[152] The self, feeling that there is nothing beyond it, sinks into the solitude of itself or escapes to social, political and other organisations of the kind, that cannot, however, fill his spiritual void. Jung considered that the modern individual, lacking the belief in a transcendent life, suffered a profound shock in psychological terms, as he fell into uncertainty, which is something that leads to psychic dissociation and sickness.

Der Zauberberg, as a *Zeitroman*, and with its ambition of being an encyclopaedia of life in the form of a novel, of embracing everything that constitutes humanity, certainly concerns itself with the above mentioned developments, namely, with the individual's relation to modernity. Concerning

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[152] J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 8

the religious issue more specifically, one of the novel's multiple strata is religious. So, taking *Der Zauberberg* as a *Zeitroman*, I would like to examine what its new, modern ethical views add to the *Bildungsroman* as genre.

Centuries of Christianity in Europe certainly left a great imprint in European culture, and in the concept of *Bildung* itself: '[The word *Bildung*] contains vestiges of both religious and secular notions of formation as an inner process.'[153] So *Der Zauberberg*, mirroring such a culture, cannot be without religious undertones, and ideas born out of Christian ethics flow through the narrative. In fact, the very "Grail" that Hans glimpses is permeated with Christian thought, even though that is by no means the only element of which it is composed. The final goal of *Der Zauberberg* is Humanism, but, after all, and as Taylor notes, secular Humanism 'has its roots in Judaeo-Christian faith'.[154] I have already linked Mann's ideas on the wholeness of the self with Jung's view of the need to face the shadow before, and this link eventually extends to Jung's conception of a modern individual who exists beyond the Christian archetype.

The story of Hans Castorp takes place in a world that was progressively losing its religion, in a process that had actually started long before. An important period of that rupture with religion had been the very time in which the *Bildungsroman* came into being. In the first half of the eighteenth century a

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[153] Minden, in Schellinger (1998), 1, 119
[154] Taylor (1989), p. 319

movement towards secularisation in society was becoming very apparent. In Germany, more specifically, the *Aufklärung* helped to undermine the authority of religious authorities and, overall, a new critical attitude that challenged tradition and dogma arose. The hold of formal religion over people — mainly middle-class people, it must be said — began to slacken. Pietism was decisive in this change, with the importance it granted to inner life and to the individual self's capacity for feeling. This new Christianity worked now 'as a guarantor of man's ethical principles, not as a metaphysical system. Morals and dispassionate good sense became decisive arbiters in human affairs'.[155] Yet what is being mentioned here is still established religion, as Pietism itself was a religious movement: it was justified *by* and *in* the self but, essentially, it was a reinvented form of Christian belief. As a result, Swales further recognises that the *Aufklärung* enjoyed a close relationship with religion, closer than most of its European counterparts. The respect for religion to be found in German Idealism translated itself into a search for a new religious interpretation of life, and *Bildung* became the secular version of that quest for spiritual salvation, for that elusive "Grail" for which *Bildungshelden* like Hans are so many times said to be looking for.

Mann was a writer of immense political, social and cultural awareness. Deeply embedded in the world of his time, he was also very alert to the Christian tradition that had for so long influenced the European mind. Judging by the evidence of some of his writings, he was not a man of faith and was not religious

[155] Swales (1978), p. 150

by any means, so religion must have come to him as a cultural possession rather than as an item of faith, but what is certain is that he was, again, pre-eminently a moral and an ethical writer. Ethics begin with the introduction among men of a moral code, and it is known that virtually every human society has a myth explaining the origin of morality: the view expressed by myth is that civilisation demands an ethical code which makes continually possible both an extension and an intensification of social cooperation.[156] Morality is invested with mystery and power of divine origin, and consequently the link between morality and religion is very strong, it being sometimes maintained that there can be no morality without religion, as ethics flow out of religion and religion expresses itself in ethics; ethics is frequently seen as almost being moral theology, because religion is a primary moral source. And to a certain extent, man's problems are usually viewed as being ethical and religious in nature, for they mostly have to do with conduct and meaning, with values and authority, with choices in human affairs and in assurance for the soul. Considering the *Bildungsroman*'s ethical nature, religion must therefore also be an element of *Der Zauberberg*.

Be that as it may, and considering Mann's status as a moral writer, the period in which the action of *Der Zauberberg* takes place is assumed to be a time in which morals were needed more than ever, in which a *new* sense of morality

[156] In Greek mythology, for example, it is said that Zeus took pity on humans, who, living in small groups, and with inadequate teeth, weak claws and lack of enough physical attributes, were no match to the other beasts. To make up for those inadequacies, the god gave humans moral sense, so that they could live in larger communities and collaborate with one another. In religion, for instance in Christian religion, the same happens in the Old Testament's account of how God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses.

was necessary.[157] As a whole, modernity caused a transformation of the world and of the old structures by means of industrialisation and urbanisation. All things were changed from their natural state into something useful or meaningful to man. Thus the individual became alienated from nature, but also from other individuals and, ultimately, from God. The individual lost the belief that his life meant anything of consequence in the broader picture of the world of history, and also the comfort of faith in an eternal life. In this context, the search, and the *need*, for a moral and quasi-religious conscience leading to clarification, compassion and community turns into a central issue of *Der Zauberberg*, and to a greater extent, of much of Mann's fictional and non-fictional work, as does the inevitable clash between the narrowness of economic and social reality and the self.

Mann was deeply interested in the study of the history of religion, and one has to look no further than at his Joseph tetralogy to realise this.[158] Furthermore, religious motifs, such as, for instance, the sea and music, are relevant to his work.[159] In *Der Zauberberg*, for example, Ziolkowski even establishes parallels between the figure of Mynheer Peeperkorn and Christ, as the Dutchman is seen

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[157] And, in fact, it is often considered that Mann becomes even more moral after the calamity of the Great War. To illustrate this point see, for example, Gerald N. Izenberg's chapter two of *Modernism and Masculinity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[158] That can further be gathered from the evidence present in his correspondence during the thirties with the scholar of myth Karl Kerényi.

[159] According to Herbert Lehnert, the sea as a primordial force, as Hans recalls in the chapter 'Strandspaziergang'; '[Und Musik] als überwältigende Kunst der Beziehungen und der Gedanke des Todes, der das Einzelleben als bestimmte Form aufhebt, aber gerade dadurch seinen Wert konstituiert.' Quotation from Lehnert's own *Thomas Mann: Fiktion, Mythos, Religion* (Stuttgart, Berlin, Cologne, Mainz: Kohlhammer, 1965), p. 188f.

by this critic as offering Hans the humanity of Jesus, so that Hans could see it in himself.[160]

The alchemical creed maintains that nothing can come from nothing, and the same can be said to be true of many of the religious elements in Mann's work, as they come from Christian thought. That cannot be overlooked, and Mann himself certainly did not: 'Protestantische, moralische, puritanische Neigungen sitzen mir, wer weiß, im Blute.'[161] Overall, it can be said that Mann views man as his own moral legislator, but there is no denying the influence of Christian thought in his ethical view of life. There is a sense of a need for transformation, but Mann does assimilate certain points of view of traditional Christianity into his own new viewpoint. By so doing he brings tradition closer, as some aspects of it could, in a way, help to regenerate an ailing western culture, and this was certainly one of the goals of *Der Zauberberg*.

Jung had very much the same idea, as he felt it was necessary to reinvent man, but with a greater backing of spirituality, and he could see no other support than the one provided by Christianity, as the premise the Western man had to start from was and remained Christianity, which after all represented the spiritual past of the Western world. Mann shares this *religiöse Bildungsidee*: he was greatly concerned with the concept of religiosity, and he spoke of the essence of

[160] For more on this topic, see Theodore Ziolkowski's *Fictional Transfigurations of Jesus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).
[161] Mann, 10, 837

man as divine, calling it both 'Christian moral' and 'spirit of man'. When speaking of Mann's concept of morals and religiosity, Herbert Lehnert says: 'Unter "christlicher Moral" verstand er [Mann] auch [...] autonome Moral, eine Instanz an der Stelle Gottes.'[162] Lehnert dubs this dual (again) conception of Mann's 'dynamische Metaphysik', one that knows nothing of dogmas and of conventions, because Mann doubted all absolute moral or metaphysical regulations. He considered his own views on ethics and morality as a corrective, a guideline, never as a law given to man from the outside. When mentioning this corrective ideal, Lehnert notes that Mann had different names for it, names such as *Vornehmheit* and *Weisheit* — nobility and wisdom —, but also, once again, *Religiosität*: 'Religiosität ist der umfassendste Name, der hier nicht allein genannt wird, um nicht den Eindruck einer Festlegung auf einen dogmatischen Standpunkt zu erwecken.'[163] And also because, as will be even more distinctive in the Joseph tetralogy, religion is meant to be humanist and not transcendental, similar, for instance, to Goethe's concept of *das Göttliche*, the divine.

As *Der Zauberberg* is concerned with the ethical and moral renewal of the humanist tradition, it is timely to quote F. R. Leavis's conception of literary morals: 'When I say that a great work will inevitably have a profound moral significance I am thinking of such a significance as will need to be described as religious.'[164] Mann's concept of morals is not surprisingly connected to a

[162] Lehnert (1965), p. 144
[163] Ibid., p. 188
[164] Qouted in David Jasper, *The Study of Literature and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 45

religious ideal, which positions Mann in a line of other advocates of this very German tradition. He himself considered that the greatest effect of Luther's teachings was the freedom of the German mind; and as Lehnert adds: 'Gemeint ist Kants ethischer Primat. Der Gedanke strebt aber weiter, er zielt auf "das Ereignis Goethes", das eine "Bestätigung der Legitimität des Einzelwesens" gebracht habe.'[165] The view shifts to a religion of man. *Jedermann sein eigener Priester* was likewise Mann's motto, and this view could never be dogmatic, as it is associated with an idea of inner freedom — so significant to the *Bildungsroman* —, not at all related to exterior factors, be they religious institutions or the constrictions of the social world. Mann called it 'evangelical freedom', and certainly the religious connotations are not wholly misemployed.[166]

Mann's conception of religiosity might be vague, but it is certain is that he always uses it in relation to humanity, to man, and this to the *homo humanus* rather than to the *Homo Dei*. For Mann, the religious problem is, more than simply religious, a human one. It is related to the origin and ultimate goal of man, so it is a question that, in the end, is about himself. Religion is thus clothed in plain humanity. In *Der Zauberberg*, Hans Castorp's ideal of life is confirmed by the narrator, and it is one of love, as seen before. Yet Hans knew it in himself long before the vision in the snow. When he decides to visit the dying patients of

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[165] Lehnert (1965), p. 147
[166] Mann (1960), 12, 491

the sanatorium, his is an endeavour that undoubtedly proceeds from the tradition of Christian love. It is a spirit born out of compassion, the spirit of *Caritas*, not of any practice that was already common in Davos; it even goes against normal sanatorium practice, as someone's death was previously always hidden from the other patients. This is something that profoundly enrages Hans Castorp, as the extreme unction was generally given during the usual meal times, so that none of the patients had to be disturbed by the presence of death.

Hans, as shown before, does not deem proper the systematic suppression of the darkness that exists in life. He rather wants to answer it with morality, so he starts visiting the dying even against the wishes of his cousin (who only accompanies him because of Christian *convention*). Hans, however, is different from Joachim and from the patients of the sanatorium because he is fulfilling his own inner law, and this makes his conduct, in Christian terms, exemplary: 'Without love, the outward work is of no value; but whatever is done out of love, be it ever so little, is wholly fruitful.'[167] The cousins' manifestations of sympathy and condolence show that the bond between compassion and formal observances of respect leads to the affirmation of man as an ethical being. By answering the imminent death of some patients by form, Hans expresses his total humanity, one that undoubtedly contains a religious element.

[167] Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (London: Penguin, 1952), p. 43

As seen previously, form is order and purpose, and is at the heart of human morality, the moral upper world, which consists of clear and humane thinking. The love Hans is able to express for the dying derives from Christian love, and it is also love for a life that is about to end. Life is always at risk in the world, a truth that Hans so precariously realises in his dream, so humane love is the only answer to that: 'Der Glaube an Gott ist der Glaube an die Liebe, an das Leben.'[168] The example of Christ is the pure expression of this spirit, this will-to-good, which Christ himself called love, and Hans's expression of it can be seen in the very same light. The love that Hans sees in his vision in the snow, then, is impregnated with a religious element. It is not fleshly love — it is closer to *Agápe* than to *Eros* —, however it is also not, not entirely, Christian love, because the new Humanism of *Der Zauberberg* is also an overtaking of religious thought, of purely Christian ethics.[169]

The love that Hans sees exists even when murder is taking place, when children are being slaughtered, so it must be possible even when doubts arise about man's ability to live by it. It is a love that does not depend on anything but itself, neither on rationality nor on temperance, and not on any religious duty, observance or faith in anything that transcends man. It must surface under conditions that would drive both the Christian and the Humanist to the brink of desperation. Only such a love can be stronger than death, whilst still respecting

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[168] Mann (1960), 12, 504
[169] Kristiansen (1986), p. 273

life and life's intrinsic darkness. Culture cannot be removed, especially after two thousand years, so the Christian influence on the love seen in Hans's vision does exist, yet Jung's analytical psychology helps to shed some light on why that influence is not, in the end, everything.

Mann's fictional religiosity is only complete with the motif of love, then: in *Der Zauberberg*, for instance, Hans swears allegiance to *Liebe und Güte* in his dream, and these are responses that are more important than faith, because they do not need faith to exist. Man is all that is needed for them to appear in the world, and this is the core of *Der Zauberberg*'s new humanism: Humanism, after all, consists of nothing more than the love for humankind (ZB, 220). The overall religious tones of the theme of *Bildung*, and of *Der Zauberberg* more in particular, do exist — as the noumenal quality, the inner gold of the individual that *Bildung* presupposes could certainly be called soul —, but the novel's final goal is a religiosity without God, where love surfaces, as was said before, 'an der Stelle Gottes'. If there is a Christian element in the above-mentioned love, Jungian analytic psychology unveils the reason why this element is viewed as imperfect if standing on its own.

The goal of *Bildung* is the wholeness of the self, and — in the context of the twentieth century and of a *Bildungsroman* such as *Der Zauberberg* — that wholeness implies the total acknowledgement of the shadow that exists in the psyche and in the physical world, as Hans's dream reveals. According to Jung's

ideas, it is the shunning of this darkness, associated with death in *Der Zauberberg*, that transforms Hans's story in an overtaking of Christian thought, as these do not allow for the self to achieve wholeness to the fullest extent possible. 'Was ist denn aber das Religiöse', asks Mann, and 'der Gedanke an den Tod' is the answer he provides.[170] And this is exactly what Mann and Jung consider to be missing in Christianity as a whole; so despite the Christian elements that exist in both of them, both Jung's and Mann's cosmogonies no longer points at God.

Nietzsche said of the Greeks that they had once accepted the world in both its good and bad, accepting their own inner light and shadow, and Mann also saw in their outlook on life something very alluring. Lehnert is considering exactly that when he says that Mann saw in the Greeks' outlook an improved conception of mankind: '[Die klassische] Menschenauffassung, die den Menschen der Teilnahme am Geiste grundsätzlich für fähig und daher Selbstperfektion für möglich halt.'[171] And Mann placed as an opposite to this view none other than the Christian-biblical tradition that considered that man could not aspire to attain certain heights because both him and those goals were subservient to God. The only way to escape God, to Mann, is through sin, which alone makes any prospect of an eternal life unfeasible. Perfection might be too strong a word, but the very concept of *Bildung* is predicated upon the assumption that at least a

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[170] Mann (1960), 'Fragment über das Religiöse', 11, 423
[171] Lehnert (1965), p. 180

certain degree of, say, distinction, is possible. As a Humanist, Mann rejected everything that could in any way cripple man; Hans, too, views man as a master, so it can be no different when it comes to the specific question of religion.

Jung also agreed with the Nietzschean view of the Greeks, as he too considered that the Christian approach to life did not allow for the wholeness of the self, just as the Platonic-Socratic view did not allow it, for both wrench the light half of the world away from the dark half, and the dark weight of the world must enter into any understanding of the whole. Jung considered that this was caused by the phenomenon of civilisation, which, as mentioned earlier, suppresses truths that were once held by all men and women alike. And what is missing in Christianity is an engaged reflection on death, the darkness in life and in the self that for Jung mean one and the same thing.

In archetypal theory, Christ is considered as one of the several universal archetypes of the self, others being, among many, Purusha, the Atman, and Buddha. Embodying an exterior power and authority — and for that being from the beginning somewhat untrustworthy for the modern individual — and greater than the conscious human ego, the Christ archetype, nevertheless, does not fully represent the self:

> Daher besitzt das Symbol des Selbst keineswegs immer jene Ganzheit [...], auch die Gestalt Christi nicht, denn dieser fehlt die Nachtseite der seelischen Natur, die Finsternis des Geistes und die Sünde. Ohne

> Integration des Bösen aber gibt es keine Ganzheit, auch kann es nicht "mit Gewalt in die Mischung gezwungen" werden.[172]

The self must be allowed to know the negation of the shadow, and for this the Christian archetype must be eventually overcome. The self must know sin to know morality, must know evil to be able to strike a balance with *Liebe* and *Güte*, must know the shadow to know the light. For all this, Christ is a true, if only a partial symbol of a self that must be allowed to grow. The archetype should have in it the essence of human wholeness, and the archetype of Christ does not.

Alchemy, as has been noted several times, is of some importance in *Der Zauberberg*, and it is, in addition, considered by Jung to be the study of Christianity's unconscious, to put it in terms of his analytic psychology, so its purpose is to reveal the compensatory reaction of the unconscious towards the dominant attitude of Christian consciousness: 'In der christlichen Anschauung dagegen ist der Archetypus in zwei unvereinbare Hälften insofern hoffnungslos gespalten.'[173] This fissure might be thought to exist, but as Jung says, no tree can grow to heaven unless its roots reach down to hell. To think it is not so is the shortcoming of the Christ archetype, and subsequently of Christianity itself. The elusive goal of maximum integration of the psyche may never be accomplished,

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[172] Jung, 'Versuch eines psychologischen Deutung des Trinitätsdogmas' (1963), 11, 170. Jung also has the somewhat exaggerated opinion that, to allow for the integration of evil, the Devil should be united to the Trinity. I just mention that for what it is worth and nothing more.

[173] Jung, 'Christus, ein Symbol des Selbst', *Aion: Beiträge zur Symbolik des Selbst*, ed. Lilly Jung-Merker and Elisabeth Rüf (Olten and Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1976), 9.2, 52

Jung concedes, but it must be aimed at. The self must only accept Christian ethics in the aspect of attainment of selfhood, for the Christ archetype has not yet undergone the long way that comes with the recognition of darkness. This is a view, moreover, that is by no means confined to Jung. In *Eyeless in Gaza*, when speaking about men who attempt to emulate the ideal personality of Christ, Huxley too notes the rejection of death that exists in Christian thought, a 'readiness to let the dead bury their dead', which is equivalent to saying that death is not for the company of the living.[174]

The fear of the shadow of the unconscious psyche is an obstacle to self-awareness and consequently to a complete *Bildungsprozeß*. The shadow shows itself personally and collectively and is always in the world *in potentia*, and, because of this, the fear of darkness is also an obstruction to a better understanding of the world, because the shadow *is*, and to fear it is, to a certain extent, even immoral: some flowers open only at night, as Jung says, and if in daylight everything seems clear, it must be remembered that the night lasts as long as the day, and that man lives in the night time too.

As a symbol of the self, and composing an image of divinity, the archetype of Christ must be perfect. But there is a huge gap between perfection and completeness:

[174] Aldous Huxley, *Eyeless in Gaza* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1938), p. 145

> Wenn man dazu neigt, den Archetypus des Selbst als das eigentliche Agens und damit Christus als Symbol des Selbst aufzufassen, muß man bedenken, daß zwischen *Vollkommenheit* und *Vollständigkeit* ein wesentlicher Unterschied besteht: das Christusbild ist annähernd vollkommen (wenigstens ist es so gedacht), der Archetypus aber (soweit als bekannt) meint Vollständigkeit, ist aber weit davon, vollkommen zu sein.[175]

The individual who strives after some kind of perfection, like the *Bildungsheld*, must know what its opposite is to achieve it. Facing the shadow in all its forms is the answer of human(ist) integrity. As Hans sees in the snow, it is the resolve to live in the face of death, in the fear of nothingness, that is the preciousness of human existence. Before every soul is the choice of life and death, and in every soul the shadow is a terrible force that tries to determine the final outlook. That is one of Hans's few certainties, but the freedom to chose derives from the knowledge of what is there to be chosen, so there can be no true freedom to choose if one does not know the shadow. And that is why the purely Christian archetype is finally overcome in *Der Zauberberg*.

It is certain that Jung's insight into the shortcoming of Christian designs is one of the possible answers to the novel's new ethical vision that overcomes Christian thought, and this despite the evident import of that thought on some aspects of the narrative. This answer is even more credible if one takes into account the influence of Nietzsche on both Jung and Mann, thus making them more akin, but that influence, none the less, and like an archetype, takes its particular colour from each individual's mind.

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[175] Jung, 'Christus, ein Symbol des Selbst' (1976), 9.2, 78

The modern individual, generally, reacted against authority, here in the sense of authoritative morality, in the sense that there were no absolute moral laws any longer. In a fragmented and unstable society, Christian ethics could no longer provide an answer, because man would consequently become part of a dogma, and that would represent denying the possibility of realising the wholeness of the self, it would be, in fact, to acknowledge the defeat of the self. Conventional morality had never been of any use to Hans Castorp, so in *Der Zauberberg*, Mann's concept of religiosity ends up meaning much more 'spirit of man' than 'Christian moral'. In the light of ethical criticism, what remains in the end of the narrative can be called grace, but in a secular sense — the grace of *Bildung*. The *Urbild* here is the archetype of humanity, it resides in human morality leading to ethical behaviour, and there alone, so this is a grace that, taking from it, nevertheless exists beyond Christian ethics.

5.1. The religious element of Hemingway's code and how it exists beyond Christian ethics

> A new generation... grown up to find all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken.
>
> F. Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*

When he is wounded during the war, Nick Adams is also wounded in a spiritual sense. Faced with constant, meaningless death, Nick turns back to God, the same God in Whom he did not seem to believe earlier: in 'Now I Lay Me',

deeply traumatised, Nick prays, even though he says that he is only praying for everyone he knows.

Nick's plight in life is not very different from the general experience of the modern individual, and the fact that he fought in the First World War serves only to exacerbate some of the aspects of that modern experience. Nick did not have an answer for what he had encountered in the battlefields of Europe; nothing or Nobody, from this world or from another, could provide him with one, and this is something which is associated with Hemingway's overall view on the condition of man. In 'Big Two-Hearted River', Nick has to provide his own answer to the shadow. And if that answer does not correspond to what Jung thought was desirable, one should bear in mind that Hemingway, like Mann, is pre-eminently a moral and ethical writer:

> Hemingway is a moralist: heir, like his world, to the destruction by science and empiricism of nineteenth-century value assumptions, he rejects equally these assumptions and the principle underlying them—that intellectual moral abstractions possess independent supersensual existence. Turning from the resulting nihilism, he goes to experience in the actual world of hostility, violence and destruction to find in the world which destroyed the old values a basis for new ones. [...] But out of his concern with action in a naturalistic universe, he has not evolved new moral values; rather he has reaffirmed man's oldest ones.[176]

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[176] Clinton S. Burhans, Jr., 'Hemingway's Tragic Vision', in Carlos Baker (ed.), *Ernest Hemingway: Critiques of Four Major Novels* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. 155

Yet the protagonist of much of Hemingway's fiction is viewed by many as some kind of brute who does nothing but draw from the physical world, and Nick, too, is sometimes viewed as rather primitive.

In short, what is sometimes assumed is that the Hemingway figure lacks moral stature, disregarding that another famous Hemingway aphorism consists of the rather ethical question 'how to live in it', 'it' meaning the world.[177] None the less, Wyndham Lewis spoke of the Hemingway hero as having no will or intelligence, and D. S. Savage wrote that Hemingway himself showed no religion, morality, politics, culture or history, thus having, according to this critic, no human existence whatsoever.[178] In 1999, during the centenary of Hemingway's birth, the tone of criticism grew even louder, as Hemingway, despite renewed insight into more complex aspects of his work, was attacked by many a post-modern school of literary criticism.

This criticism is, then, politically motivated, and can be linked, as it was during Hemingway's life, to his alleged irresponsibility, as he was always accused of it for not assuming a definite political stance, and his writing for not carrying the banner of particular social groups or social programs. Yet this results from his own view on what the true function of literature should be: '[What was

[177] This became established in *The Sun Also Rises*, says: 'I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it.' See Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. 153.

[178] See Dimri Jaiwanti, *Ernest Hemingway* (New Delhi: Anmol, 1994), p. 55. For a comprehensive review of negative criticism of Hemingway, see, for example, Malcolm Cowley, 'Mr. Papa and the Parricides', in Bloom (1985).

objectionable to Hemingway] was letting something as extraneous as political or economic doctrine dictate what should happen in a story. He insisted many times that only the writer's sense of the validity of events and emotions could dictate the action.'[179] The problem with this argument, at any rate, is that Hemingway's literary-aesthetic views are usually not highly regarded anyway.

If, as a writer, Hemingway does not pose himself questions of a metaphysical nature like, say, a Huxley or a Joyce, this does not mean that his fictional characters are not imbued with strong ethical concerns, as Colvert notes: 'Hemingway as a writer is concerned above all else with the problem of conduct.'[180] Ethics, after all, has to do with relation to others, which, in its turn, lies at the heart of any questions about conduct. And, as Evans notes, Hemingway's anti-intellectualism is a self-imposed discipline which ends up becoming a philosophy.[181] It is for this reason that I find the approach of critics such as Clinton S. Burhans, Jr., or Edmund Wilson preferable: 'His [Hemingway's] whole work is a criticism of society: he has responded to every pressure of the moral atmosphere of the time, as it is felt at the roots of human relations, with a sensitivity almost unrivalled.'[182] Hemingway's main concern is

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[179] Robert O. Stephens, *Hemingway's Non-Fiction: The Public Voice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 116

[180] Colvert (1955), 372. Interestingly enough, Joyce famously decided in the 1930s that he was more interested in style than in politics, and made a point of never signing manifestos, aesthetic or political.

[181] See Evans (1966), 173.

[182] Edmund Wilson, in *The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature* (London: Methuen, 1961), p. 215

man, and man's experience in modern times, and man is a subject that is universal enough, to be sure, one that is beyond all notions of politics.

The fact that the characters of Hemingway's fictional work draw from the physical world does nothing to diminish the notion that they have strong ethical concerns, which even have a religious side to them. In fact, this drawing from the physical world, in the framework of American literary tradition, only increases that idea. Nick Adams, for instance, has those ethical concerns, and, despite wanting to learn how to live in it, he is aware of the invalidity of any intellectual constructs that are without the seal of reality. As a Hemingway protagonist, as seen before, what Nick is not is a pure thinker, nor could he be, for he is, additionally, an American initiate. The traumas of Nick's life lead decisively to a shrinking of the intellectual element, as was discussed above in relation to 'Big Two-Hearted River'. This happens because of the individual's need to defend himself against the shadow of the self and in the world, and it might be related to a general strain of pessimism in American literature. However, that does not have to be seen in an entirely negative way: 'The pessimism of most American Literature, like that of their descendant Hemingway, has gained more in energy than it lost in hope; in the words of Juliet Mitchell [...] this tradition enforced "pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will."'[183]

[183] Douglas (1996), p. 217

The need is for grace under pressure, and that grace cannot stem from intellectual processes. There are many senses in which grace can be seen in Hemingway's work and which relate to his vision of ethics. Tackling the religious element of the code, much as was done in relation to *Der Zauberberg*, is particularly relevant, for it allows to see how Hemingway's work and the ethical views expressed in it, too, represent a reinvention and an overtaking of the Christian element. Hemingway's concept of ethics surpasses this Christian element, but not, as in *Der Zauberberg*, because the Christian view is incomplete, but because it is viewed as incompatible with the world.

Seen in a secular sense, grace is central to Hemingway's work, as he even possesses an ethics in his very style of writing; there is a code there, too. The Hemingway code, more broadly, is based on courage, but also on suffering and endurance, and in these last two factors lies its Christian element. In a way, that is the image of divinity in man, at least, if only divinity were possible for him. As Maud Bodkin says, one of the components of the Christian ideal is, after all, patient endurance.[184] Now Nick has seen suffering in the world and has suffered himself. He has seen his own expectations betrayed and has been subjected to extreme violence, yet he managed to gather himself in 'Big Two-Hearted River'. The natural, animal, one can say, the instinctive reaction to suffering is resentment, dejection. But only man has the ability to have a supra-animal

[184] Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, 5th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 286

reaction to the suffering and pain ever-present in the world, and this is an ability that leads to regeneration.

Man is not merely animal, and, as the Christian view has it, by suffering he can advance morally as well, and his stature as a man grows in accordance if he acts like one and embraces suffering. As Christ suffered, so can man suffer, and as in the former's sacrifice, so in man's can a positive value be found. Like a soldier, the code hero knows that hardship — and ultimately death — are unavoidable, but, as is well known, Christianity immensely widened the field of heroic and stoic endurance: 'Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.' (2 Tim. 2: 3)

'Big Two-Hearted River' has many religious symbols in it: the fishes as a symbol of Jesus or the water as a symbol of rebirth, even Nick's retirement into the woods has been compared to Christ's sojourn in the wilderness, or Adam looking at creation, but the most important is what lies underneath, namely the virtues in Nick's actions that are the reaction to suffering that leads to the code, and therein lies the Christian influence in Hemingway's thought. Faulkner said once that no one is without Christianity, in the broad sense of a code of behaviour, and, despite their rivalries in life, Hemingway gave the same character to his code. Nick's awareness of death is intimately related to suffering. He suffers because of its presence in the world, but it is the acknowledgment of that presence that leads to his view of death in 'Fathers and Sons'.

The code hero also shows, besides the ability to suffer, the Christian virtues of humility and the refusal to exalt himself above his own human station, thus being in conformity with the struggle of modern man:

> Ernest Hemingway is too thoroughly committed to naturalism and too honest a man to try to delude himself into thinking that one can ever get outside the dimension of time; yet he is aware of what other men have meant in saying that an experience of completeness, wholeness, and power and delight may convey an aspect of eternity.[185]

Brooks is writing from the perspective of a Christian critic, but he is right to point out that Hemingway's vision of man is totally secular.[186] If the Hemingway characters point towards eternity is arguable, but what is not is the fact that they have in their behaviour many traits that come directly out of Christian tradition, as do Mann's, and this fact lends support to Burhans's view that Hemingway is in fact reaffirming the oldest values of mankind.

As happens with Mann, the cultural factors of the Western world play a significant part in this reshaping of Christian thought. Just as with Hans's view of life and love, Nick's deliberately ethical conduct is by no means constituted only by Christian elements, but that does not mean that they are not directly related to the spirit and the moral state of the modern individual, as Brooks admits: 'If we

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[185] Brooks (1963), p. 18

[186] Hemingway converted to Catholicism in 1929. See Baker (1982), p. 110ff. Baker thinks of Hemingway as a Catholic writer, and of his hero as bearing traits of a Christian figure. His first assumption is debatable.

demand of our serious literature that it make overt preachments of Christianity, we shall certainly exclude some of the most spiritually nourishing literature of our time.'[187]

In scholastic philosophy, man is viewed as a contingent being, that is, one who is dependent on something exterior to him. Hemingway's vision of modern man's condition is similar, as any control over his life is taken away from his hands, even if not by a divine instance. However, Hemingway's code hero refuses this state of mere 'creaturehood'. If he cannot control life, he is the only one who can at least provide it with some kind of meaning. The fatalism of Hemingway's stance on life and his lack of belief in any absolute truths external to man estranges him from pure Christian doctrine, as the latter believes that there is a Being greater than man that is at the same time the guarantor of man's ultimate victory. Hemingway's tragic sense is of another kind altogether, as man is certain to face defeat at the ends of death, and with no hope of an afterlife. But what matters to the code, as was already said, and even if man is doomed to that defeat, is that he must be defeated on his own terms.

By not facing the shadow, Nick accepts suffering as being necessary, one of life's certainties, the impossibility of truly coming to terms with death. Knowing violence and death, Nick too loses faith in traditional morals and values, including all religious ones. As in Mann, the thrust is towards a new

[187] Brooks (1963), p. 5

religion of man, because God and the afterworld do not enter into the equation. For Hemingway, someone who depends too heavily on prayer is not, as it were, very admirable.[188] Man should depend only on himself to give meaning to the world, because nothing else is dependable. This is seen as being the plight of the individual man in a world of death and violence which God is seen as having abandoned.

For Hemingway, death is man's central experience in the world. The fear of death is mankind's basic anxiety, and it can be argued that it brought religion into being in the first place. But the anxiety of death is also bound up with Nick's very own self, here in the form of the psyche's shadow. The world is hostile and man is rendered powerless in the face of powers such as death, yet the code helps Nick cope with that particular fear. It is this emphasis on the ability of the individual to depend on himself that is so appealing to Christian critics like Brooks, and he views it in terms that are completely Christian:

> Hemingway's emphasis upon courage [...] is, as a matter of fact, significant and perhaps necessary as a first step toward moving back toward the Christian virtues. Hemingway, of course, stops short of the domain of Christianity proper, but he does see that the man who lacks courage, a mere slave to his fears, is not truly free and not truly human.[189]

From an early age, Nick had seen that birth and death are simultaneously present in the world. The Amerindian who kills himself is turned against the

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[188] In *Death in the Afternoon*, Hemingway describes a cowardly bullfighter by means of having him pray before a fight because the bullfighter is said to be 'frightened sick'. See Hemingway (1977), p. 83.
[189] Brooks (1963), p. 15

wall, as is the old boxer Ole Andreson, as if to signify their withdrawal from life and subsequent turning towards death. They had not chosen morally, and, without moral choice, man is dehumanised and loses the dignity that is the result of the making of that choice. For the Christian, but also for the existentialist, for instance, this represents the struggle of the individual to affirm himself as a true human being. No individual who makes this choice remains unaltered, as personality does not stand still, and the choice can have positive or negative implications in the individual's growth. Quietly accepting death does not mean anything in itself, as endurance is no virtue without moral choice. The world is no kingdom of God, as Nick's mother would like him to believe, it is a fruitless and pointless world, and the little meaning that it might have is given upon it by man, who at the same time does not need any help to obliterate all meanings, in what constitutes the supreme human paradox.

As it ultimately does not deal with the shadow, for it does not attempt to understand and answer it, the code that Nick heeds maintains the notion that suffering is inherent in life, and that view is indebted to Christian thought. The appreciation of man's ability to live in this way ends up being spiritual, and speaks for man's dignity and worthy behaviour, as the Italian major of 'A Way You'll Never Be' shows to Nick. If, in general, Hemingway's code is premised on a religiosity without God, that does not diminish the fact that there is something religious to it, as the code hero attempts to act as a dignified man in a dehumanised world, not to be a mere thing: 'The virtues that Hemingway

celebrates are ultimately necessary for Christianity, and [...] they look towards Christianity. For they have everything to do with man's dignity as a free spirit.'[190] If a single man is capable of decency and dignity, that is what matters, and this is Hemingway's religion of man, one that does not look for rewards in another world, and only prizes coping with life in this one.

Mere revolt against old ethical systems is more likely to delay growth than the opposite. There is a necessity for both tradition and progression, so the new conduct the code hero puts forward incorporates what he saw as valuable in the old, but he has no need for its shortcomings and inadequacies. The question here is not to analyse the depth of Hemingway's faith, or even if he was religious or not. All studies on Hemingway seem sometimes to jump indistinguishably from his fiction to the events of his life and vice-versa.[191] In ethical terms, what remains from *The Nick Adams Stories* is the search for right conduct, for right action. The question of all great literature has to do with man's status in the world, and Hemingway does not provide an answer to that, he only has a vision of how man should try to act.

The ability of man to be just this is seen as sufficient and positive, and a large part of Hemingway's much-talked concept of manhood relies on nothing

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[190] Ibid., p. 20

[191] As Moddelmog notes regarding *The Nick Adams Stories*: 'Certainly critics are right that Hemingway comes close to crossing the boundary between fiction and experience in these pages, but that is a line he almost always approaches in his Nick Adams stories.' See Moddelmog (1988), 60, 593.

more than this. Unlike Hans, Nick does not need to be seen as a redeemer, because he sees himself, gladly and in conscience, as just a man struggling to find that one great good true thing in the world.

V

Conclusion

> Sometimes it is the only thing that drives a philosopher to philosophise, a writer to write: to leave a message in a bottle, because in some way what one believes or what one finds beautiful can be believed or seen as beautiful by those who come after.
>
> Umberto Eco, *Belief or Non-Belief*

As the ideas underlying the *Bildungsroman* owe much to eighteenth-century views, especially when it comes to the relationship — which has an undoubtedly ethical character — between the individual and the world, the widespread disillusionment regarding that relationship which exists in much twentieth-century literature has given rise to claims, such as Thornton's, that 'interest in the *Bildungsroman* has waned, suggesting that the relationship between the individual and culture that brought the genre into being has somehow changed'.[1] The war-induced social and cultural breakdown and disenchantment of twentieth-century Europe lies behind such claims, as the genre has fallen into a somehow undefined and uncertain state. I believe, however, that the *Bildungsroman*'s probing and re-evaluating of the above-mentioned relationship between the individual and the world — which was meant, after all, to improve it — has lost none of its relevance for the contemporary reader.

[1] Thornton (1994), p. 69

When it comes to German letters, it is true that the *Bildungsroman* — because it is somehow related, as seen before, to perhaps uncomfortable questions of Germanness —, fallen into disuse since the 1930s. I believe that Hesse's *Das Glasperlenspiel*, dealing as it does with the relationship of the individual with society, with the tension between reflection and action, is possibly the last great, significant example of the genre. The same is sometimes said of *Der Zauberberg*, and Mann's novel certainly bears remarkable resemblances to *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, more so than *Das Glasperlenspiel*, and it is true that it does in fact convey the feeling that a certain concept of culture had come full-circle and was in dire need of renewal, a renewal that *Der Zauberberg* found, paradoxically, in the reaffirmation of old humanist values.

As interest in the *Bildungsroman* faded, critics had to coin terms such as the 'anti-*Bildungsroman*' to keep the discussion around the genre alive. However, outside Germany, the term *Bildungsroman* became increasingly well-liked and widespread: such is the case, for example, of some American literary criticism, which attached a myriad of texts dealing with the formative years of young protagonists to the genre. The fact that the *Bildungsroman* broadly deals with a coming-of-age theme and usually involves a protagonist struggling in his relationship with society and with his own self-definition has been especially seized by a number of postmodern critical fields, namely feminist and queer criticisms and post-colonial studies, as texts concerned with themes such as

gender, sexual orientation or race often deal with a young protagonist's struggle to affirm his own identity in the face of commonly accepted social standards.

However, as has been demonstrated in this thesis, there are fundamental attributes of the *Bildungsroman* of German origin that do not find correspondence in the American narrative of initiation, something which is strongly related to the culture of each country. The initiate, after all, reacts mainly to social constraints, during his development he is confronted with concrete situations and obstacles, whereas the *Bildungsheld* is faced with more abstract questions. Consequently, and as the examples in question confirm, the narrative of initiation is somehow more straightforward, both in theme — as the themes are closer to actual human predicaments — and style — which tends to reflect the way in which people act and speak —, than the *Bildungsroman* with its philosophical tendencies.

This relative simplicity of the narrative of initiation — which accounts for its greater realism — is noticeable in Hemingway's *The Nick Adams Stories*, where the very straightforwardness of the style of writing mirrors in the relative normality of what happens in the short stories, which deal mainly with normal situations and actions, with ordinary people, in the American literary tradition of dealing with the common folk. Perhaps because of its philosophical tendencies — coupled with notions of what is considered serious in German literature —, the *Bildungsroman* appears at times oddly detached from the "real world",

especially from what many a modern reader has come to expect from modern literature. But, all in all, from the four *Bildungsromane* which have been looked into, only *Der Nachsommer* can be characterised as somewhat bloodless and disengaged, whereas Wilhelm Meister, Heinrich Lee and Hans Castorp are all protagonists who are effectively at odds with the world, if each in their own way.

The *Bildungsroman* presents a process of the self's gradual organic unfolding and postulates a ultimate meaning in the relationship between the individual and the world, whereas the narrative of initiation is sceptical of the likelihood of that happening. Both types, of course, are strongly individualistic, as they focus on the formation of a young protagonist and thus describe the problems of his own personal coming of age, yet one would do well, when making an overview of the comparison between the *Bildungsroman* and the narrative of initiation, to remember Lukes's view on the uniqueness of German individualism that proceeds from its compatibility with social unity, i.e. its goal consisting of the integration of the individual into society (see chapter II, note 53). American individualism, however, rejoices in its fierce and untamed nature, the legacy of the frontier, and since the very beginnings of American literature, this individualism expresses itself more in civil disobedience than in the acceptance of collective goals.

Individualism is seen as an end in itself in American letters, and the figure of the rebel, defined by his or her *otherness* from what society stands for, is the

perpetual representation of the American hero, as can be seen in general in the narratives of initiation analysed in this thesis, all modern in character, and even more so in the twentieth-century examples:

> Mediation between Self and World appears no longer possible [...]. The hero has become an anti-hero. And the latter, knowing that there is always an element of crime in freedom, that indeed freedom may be defined only in terms of rebellion, readied himself to pay the full price of immolation. The rebel-victim [the twentieth-century protagonist] came of age.[2]

Though their treatment of issues dealing with personal and social definition may be different, it is not surprising that these common themes in the *Bildungsroman* and the narrative of initiation find such correspondence with the theme of youth. Youth, after all, is a time especially concerned with finding an orientation in the world, personal, professional, social, even cosmological, the formative years that help to form the adult that the young protagonist is about to become. And this orientation is mainly ethical: even the absence of definite ethical implications in some of the narratives of initiation here presented has in itself a moral value.

Recent readings of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* find the moral dimension of Huck's behaviour to be seriously lacking, and the initiation of the protagonists of *Winesburg, Ohio* and *The Red Badge of Courage* also lacks a clear-cut ethical positioning. In Anderson's short-story sequence the fragmentary character of George's initiation and the vagueness of his vision of manhood lie

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[2] Hassan (1961), p. 327

behind these claims, whereas in Crane's novel, Henry's return to the army can as easily be attributed to the protagonist's ethical demands upon himself as to the need for survival in the middle of the frenzy of war. The 'tranquil philosophy' that the narrator alludes to is surely not the product of Henry's rational activity, but of an instinctive reaction — or reactive instinct — that distances this narrative of initiation from the organically-maturing moral considerations of the *Bildungsroman*. The initiation of the American protagonist may turn out to have ethical value, but his struggle does not have as its starting point the search for a definite ethical positioning, because his goal is not to find accommodation in society. It is not a deliberately ethical goal, at least not until *The Nick Adams Stories*.

Here *The Nick Adams Stories* differ from previous narratives of initiation, for the confirmation of Nick's initiation rests on deliberate ethical foundations. As a narrative of initiation, Hemingway's narrative thus comes closer to some core issues of the *Bildungsroman*, in the sense that the main endeavour of the protagonist, when confronted with the brutal violence of the First World War, is to find a way to relate to (and cope with) the world, and Nick's deliberate and positive stance has a different character from the other narratives of initiation that precede it. In its response to the pressures of the time, one might suggest that Nick's conduct — the code — is the only possible response to the collapse of the Great War; it stems from the need to confront such a destructive and heartless conflict. To do so from a definite ethical standpoint is seen as the only way to

validate man's humanity, and this belief is what makes Hemingway's code, despite its apparent simplicity, so strongly humanist in nature.

As in the case of other initiates and *Bildungshelden*, though, Nick's and Hans's paths remain essentially other, but they share an ethical response to a world in collapse. This might be uncommon, as seen before, in the framework of the narrative of initiation, but ethics, a moral stance, is the backbone of the *Bildungsroman* genre, so one should continuously bear in mind Minden's view that the *Bildungsroman* is founded on the belief in the moral formation of the individual (see chapter I, note 16). The genre's morality is based on the individual's effort to guide his conduct by reasonable thinking, meaning, quite simply, to act reasonably doing what is best while giving equal weight to the interests of each individual who will be affected by his conduct: progression towards this way of thinking is the true goal of self-cultivation. The *Bildungsroman* is moral, that much is true, but it is not moralising, predicated as it is upon the reader's critical engagement with the text, in a relationship in which the reader has to both help define the text and benefit from it.

Der Zauberberg, too, is intensely concerned with responding ethically to the same conflict that is at the centre of *The Nick Adams Stories*: it is the historical context of war that sets it apart from the other *Bildungsromane* here considered. Of these, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* is the one that most clearly displays the optimistic character of the genre; *Der Nachsommer* represents the

Bildungsroman at its most utopian and idealistic; while *Der grüne Heinrich*, despite its aspect of resignation towards the unforgiving corporeal nature of events, ultimately affirms the positive character of the genre. In a time of such an extreme crisis, *Der Zauberberg* could not totally follow these examples, but its response to the demands of its time none the less confirms that it is still possible to answer the folly of war by reaffirming human(ist) values.

Der Zauberberg transplants the *Bildungsroman*'s values to a modern setting, and Mann's novel not only reaffirms them but, perhaps more importantly, it reinvents them. This new humanism, because it concerns itself with life as well as death, or rather, with the relation between life and death, between the light and the shadow, is where the novel's links with Jungian thought can be most clearly seen: 'Unlike the usual position of humanism, Jung does not privilege reason. Instead, he designates as supremely important forms of knowledge dependent upon the collective unconscious.'[3] The humanism that *Der Zauberberg* affirms is seen by Hans in a dream, outside the realm of conscious rational thought, and, even if it is accessible to the conscious self, it is never completely comprehensible, it is perhaps, if seen in the light of Jungian thought, nothing more than a glimpse.

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[3] Susan Rowland, *C. G. Jung and Literary Theory: The Challenge from Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p. 5

Like *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, *Der Zauberberg* also does not express a single, fixed view of man, it rather balances the manifold tendencies of the individual. The humanism of Mann's novel is complex, it recognises the futility of trying to come to terms with reality from an exclusive rational viewpoint, from a single perspective. As the complexity of the world and of the human events that take place in it frequently appear absurd, the rational approach might many times lead to confusion and despair, for it is sometimes impossible to make sense of existence. This irrational aspect of reality can only be understood if the shadow within the individual is acknowledged; and this is exactly what Hans does. Hans's return to the reality of a world engulfed in war, however, highlights a distinct aspect of the *Bildungsroman* genre, namely that clarification of consciousness is nothing without the stamp of reality, reflection is nothing without action to complement it: engagement with the world is the final step in the protagonist's *Bildungsweg*. Even in *Der Nachsommer*, where this engagement means in fact the isolated pursuit of personal aspirations, it is the world that is seen as ultimately reaping the benefits of such a position.

The ending of Hans's process of self-cultivation is not clear, but it remains the reader's task, in the best tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, to complete it. In 'Schnee', Hans sees that love is the essential force in the world: this is his clarification of consciousness, is an ethical beginning. Only action in the world can ultimately render that clarification meaningful, so Hans eventually has to return to the flatlands, and this is where the reader is asked to intervene, to

benefit from Hans's vision of humanity. In contrast to earlier *Bildungsromane*, the world presented in *Der Zauberberg* does not possess — and it could hardly be otherwise, due to the circumstances of the time — that belief in ultimate purpose, in a meaning in the relation between the individual and the world. Ever since *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, there had always been something in the universe that seemed to work for the *Bildungsheld*'s benefit, a belief in an ultimate order that undoubtedly owed much to the ideas of the *Aufklärung* — and also to centuries of religious belief, which relates to *Der Zauberberg*'s reassessment of Christian thought —, yet the world involved in the realities of the Great War could hardly allow for such a belief. This is Hans's 'new individualism', as Taylor puts it, the central attribute of the modern experience: 'Disengagement from cosmic order meant that the human agent was no longer to be understood as an element in a larger, meaningful order. His paradigm purposes are to be discovered within. He is on his own.'[4]

If Mann's novel questions this order, Hemingway's code is a deliberate search for order in chaos, so that the shadow can be kept at bay, as can be seen in 'Big Two-Hearted River', the crux of *The Nick Adams Stories*. Yet, because he is alone, Nick does not find an answer to what troubles him within, as he seems intent on choking each and every thought. Instead he searches for that one great good true thing in nature, following the best tradition of the American narrative of initiation, and of American letters as a whole. As has been established in this

[4] Taylor (1989), p. 193

study, one characteristic of the American initiate is that he draws from experience: the validity of whatever meaning he gives to that experience is only authentic if it is verifiable, as his growth never depends upon intellectual abstractions.

Hans is also on his own, but it is only from within that he can give any meaning to the world, and this is where Hans's experiences in the magic mountain become intertwined with Jung's views on the experience of modern man. Mann's novel shares the legacy of the *Bildungsroman*, but it has a character, a modern character, that extends over its entire structure: 'The turn inward may take us beyond the self as usually understood, to a fragmentation of experience which calls our ordinary notions of identity into question [...]; or beyond that to a new kind of unity, a new way of inhabiting time.'[5]

Both *Der Zauberberg* and *The Nick Adams Stories* deal with issues, formal and thematic, that are distinctively modern, and, in the artistic context of the time, explicitly modernist. In this sense, they are similar, but these two narratives share other characteristics: both are very much engaged with death, overtly so, which is certainly a trend in the American narrative of initiation, with its experiences of the frontier, but less so in the *Bildungsroman*. None the less, this engagement, especially when seen in connection with both texts' ethical

[5] Ibid., p. 462. Taylor's ideas originally refer to the cases of Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (1930-1943) and Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, but they apply equally well to *Der Zauberberg* and to Hans's experiences.

undertones, ultimately relates to new ethical visions for the modern individual, visions which are indebted to Christian thought, but which ultimately, consciously and deliberately overcome it.

A characteristic of modern though, due to two world wars and to many other crises brought about by modernity, is the loss of religious belief. In *Der Zauberberg* and *The Nick Adams Stories*, the emphasis is placed instead upon the individual, in the sense that the protagonist's ethical response to the world lies solely in his own ability to provide one, either by deriving it from within or from experience. God, or the belief in a transcendent order — which was to some extent implicit in the *Bildungsroman* — no longer exist.[6] In ethical terms, this is where the modern character of *Der Zauberberg* and *The Nick Adams Stories* clearly shows itself, and why I chose to look at the Christian undertones and their ultimate overcoming in both narratives. Especially in the case of Mann's novel, this appeared as a natural consequence of the many links that exist between *Der Zauberberg* and Jung's conceptions, which then progress to meet Jung's other ideas regarding the link between the shadow and the Christ archetype.

The stoical religious element of Hemingway's code also seems undeniable, so both *The Nick Adams Stories* and *Der Zauberberg* reveal themselves more openly as re-evaluations of the Western culture they originate

[6] In *Winesburg, Ohio*, the narrator points out that George ultimately affirmed a belief in order in the world, but that point clearly remains undeveloped, suggesting that it is man that is supposed to create that meaning. This onus on man's responsibility to do so finds full expression in Hemingway.

from: '[Present-day comparative literature] lives on in the radical reassessment of Western cultural models at present being undertaken in many parts of the world.'[7] Bassnett's reference obviously has particular fields of critical theory in mind, namely feminist criticism or post-colonial studies, and both Mann and Hemingway's texts, moreover, are not likely to be picked by any of those fields. In a sense, however, both *Der Zauberberg* and *The Nick Adams Stories* depart from earlier Western models in their modernist experimentations with form and subject, in their questioning of Western values, such as religious values. Admittedly, they do it from the inside, from within that context of values, but that should not diminish the relevance of their re-evaluation of the culture from which they originated.

This thesis has examined how essentially different texts, originating from different cultural and literary traditions, were concerned with responses to life in a time where their young protagonists face common questions concerning individual formation and affirmation of their identity. All give responses to these questions, but none of them provides definite answers. Although differently, all texts attempt to come to terms with many similar issues, and therein lies the character of universality of narratives that deal with young protagonists: there are features of such narratives that can be found not only in the American and German traditions but in those of other countries as well.

[7] Bassnett (1993), p. 47

The concerns of the *Bildungsroman* of German origin and the American narrative of initiation often intersect, but their character — their soul, almost — is fundamentally other. This happens because both are intimately related to their respective cultures, and it could not be otherwise; that is where they acquire their traits, their politics:

> Once divorced from key questions of national culture and identity, comparative literature loses its way. In contexts where the assertion of identity is a central issue, the comparison of literatures and of literary histories [...] becomes an important way of reinforcing the cultural starting point.[8]

Both the *Bildungsheld*'s and the initiate's paths are paths that attempt to affirm individuality and identity, and which cannot be divorced from the culture that helps to shape them, and these cultural starting points represent the irreconcilable difference between the *Bildungsroman* and the narrative of initiation.

The *Bildungsroman* and the narrative of initiation, then, are both intimately associated with the cultures from which they sprang, with whatever has more value and is deemed more important in German and American thought. The *Bildungsroman* tradition is based on an organic development on the part of the protagonist, and this process is coloured by certain German speculative and philosophical and idealistic tendencies. The narrative of initiation portrays the confrontation between society and the pragmatic, world-weary American initiate. The narrative of initiation can therefore be described as being, since its

[8] Ibid., p. 41

beginnings, closer to what twentieth-century literature became: the American texts which are analysed in this thesis are certainly more modern in character than the *Bildungsroman*, they represent the brisk pace of modern life, which came, after all, to be identified with American culture as a whole. The *Bildungsroman*, because it has its roots in a specific time and place, seems old and worn-out when compared to the narrative of initiation, as it represents the continuation of the aesthetic and moral ideas of a long-gone age.

Intertextual relations, really, stop nowhere: readers will continue to make associations between literary works, critics will *surely* carry on grouping them together, and writers will also keep on looking for inspiration and guidance from the texts that preceded their own. As Eliot observed, the past will continue to be 'altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.'[9] The modern age demanded, one might say, new narrative forms that could deal with the nightmare of twentieth-century history. Mann's and Hemingway's work, namely *Der Zauberberg* and *The Nick Adams Stories*, responded to that demand, without ever losing sight of tradition, and of the culture that shaped their narrative borders.

[9] Eliot (1951), 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', p. 15

Appendix I

Translations from German[1]

- Page 21 (footnote 13): 'Enlightenment is man's emancipation from his self-imposed tutelage. Tutelage is man's incapacity to use his own understanding without the assistance of another. This tutelage is self-imposed if its cause is not lack of understanding but rather a lack of resolution and courage to use that understanding without the direction of another.'

- 26 (18): 'Germany? But where is it?'

- 28 (22): 'The German has the word *Gestalt* for the complex of the existence of an actual being. This expression excludes whatever is changeable; it assumes that something which is homogeneous is determined, complete, and that its character is fixed. But when we consider all forms, particularly the organic ones, we discover that nowhere do we find a resistance to change, a lack of activity, a sense of containment, but rather that everything is in a constant state of change. For that reason our language has the word *Bildung*, which is suitable enough

[1] Translations, except otherwise noted, are my own. To help locate the notes I indicate the page in which they appear and, whenever applicable, the footnote to which they refer to.

to fill the need for a word which refers not only to that which has been created but also that which is in the process of being created.'

- 32 (26): '*Bildung* is an explicitly German concept, it comes from Goethe, it was him who gave it its plastic-artistic character, the sense of freedom, culture and devotion to life, [...] this concept was elevated in Germany into an educational principle as in no other country.'

- 36 (34): 'A novel gains in stature and nobility if it concerns itself more with the portraying of inner life and less with outer events.'

- 36-37 (35): 'In the *Bildungsroman,* the emphasis is put on the progression of the protagonist's inner formation, and both plot and external circumstances have a lesser role [...] until it becomes a type that is completely unmindful of all external events.'

- 65: 'To speak it in a word; the cultivation of my individual self, here as I am, has from my youth upwards been constantly though dimly my wish and my purpose.' (WMA, 1, 327)

- 66 (9): 'His inborn impulse towards *Bildung*, the core of potentiality of his being.'

- 66: '"Happy they, who soon detect the chasm that lies between their wishes and their powers!"' (WMA, 1, 111)

- 67-68 (11): '"He in whom there is much to be developed will be later in acquiring true perceptions of himself and of the world. There are few who at once have Thought and the capacity for Action"'; '"Thought expands, but lames; Action animates, but narrows."' (WMA, 2, 129)

- 69 (14): 'It must not be overlooked that there are places in Wilhelm's letter in what is being mentioned is *Bildung* in a personal sense, as education of tendencies [...] Wilhelm is speaking, to put it in another way, both of personal *Bildung* and of *Bildung* that is active in the world, without differentiating the two.'

- 72: 'Accordingly, so soon as he commenced the actual work of composition, he became aware that he had much to say about emotions and thoughts, and many experiences of the heart and spirit; but not a word concerning outward objects, on which, as he now discovered, he had not bestowed the least attention.' (WMA, 1, 303)

- 72: 'So intense was his love, so full was his conviction of the perfect rectitude of his intention to escape from the pressure of his actual mode of life [...] that his conscience did not in the least rebel.' (WMA, 1, 70f)

- 73: '"Thou feelest not that in man there lives a spark of purer fire, which, when it is not fed, when it is not fanned, gets covered by the ashes of indifference and daily wants."' (WMA, 1, 83)

- 74 (22): 'I identify the romantic with the unhealthy.'

- 74-75 (24): 'If determination from the outside is stronger than self-determination, then the metamorphosis will be disturbed and shackled.'

- 75 (25): 'The underlying idea of *Bildung* is the demand that the self emerges from itself and becomes objective.'

- 76: 'The busy trading town in which he was; the unrest of Laertes, who dragged him about to examine everything, afforded him the most impressive image of a mighty centre, from which everything was flowing out, to which everything was coming back; and it was the first time that his spirit, in contemplating this species of activity, had really felt delight.' (WMA, 1, 313).

- 76: '"The few glances I have cast over Shakespeare's world incite me, more than anything beside, to quicken my footsteps forward into the

actual world, to mingle in the flood of destinies that is suspended over it.'" (WMA, 1, 226)

- 79: '"The behaviour of noblemen to their inferiors, and likewise to each other, is regulated by external preferences: they give each credit for his title, his rank, his clothes and equipage, but his individual merits come not into play."' (WMA, 1, 246)

- 80 (31): 'She represents what Goethe considers true Christianity. "Christian religion" is understood here as being wholly non-religious: it means humane activity towards the best of humanity.'

- 80-81 (32): 'The ideal of the society of the tower is the education of man towards a fruitful activity in a way that corresponds to his personal tendencies. The yearning for an all-round *Bildung* of the individual tendencies is right in a phase of development, but afterwards man must learn to live "for the good of others".'

- 81: '"It is all men that make up mankind: all powers together that make up the world."' (WMA, 2, 131)

- 83 (34): 'Natalie is the overcoming of the dualism between world and spirit and, under the light of the consolidated ethical aesthetics of German Classicism, beauty and good in one and thus the true beautiful soul.'

- 83 (35): '[The society of the tower] had an interest in Wilhelm because it saw in him somebody who was willing to work hard and unselfishly and to give up on much to reach something which he thought was worth reaching.'

- 84 (37): '[The society of the tower] is not an authority over Wilhelm, only a group of people heading in the same direction as him, but whose endeavours have carried them a little bit further along the path both share.'

- 86 (40): 'Under the beautiful and sacred guidance of nature (through Felix) Wilhelm progresses from the ideal to the real, from a vague striving to activity and to an understanding of reality, [...] he achieves definiteness without losing the beautiful openness to redefinition'; 'Wilhelm learns to accept restraint, but it is in this very restraint, by means of form, that he again finds a passage to the eternal and this is what I consider to be the end of his apprenticeship years.'

- 87 (41): 'Wilhelm's apprenticeship years do by no means come to an end in the sense that all of a sudden we get to see that person, who was

originally purely subjective, transformed into a truly social person; but rather only because he understands where he has to look for real life.'

- 89 (45): 'The society of the tower and Wilhelm's progression from the ideal to an ethical-practical vision of life'.

- 90 (48): 'Werner is concerned with selfish profit, whereas Wilhelm is concerned with general and useful objectives.'

- 91 (50): 'His "new" attitude towards life, which has much in common with that of the society of the tower (but was determined by Wilhelm himself in accordance with his inner nature), is not new in his life, but only now is he aware of it.'

- 91: '"Everything that happens to us leaves some trace behind it, everything contributes imperceptibly to form us."' (WMA, 2, 2)

- 91-92 (52): 'In the happy ending of *Wilhelm Meisters Apprenticeship*, the neo-humanist ideal of Bildung is not sacrificed at the altar of useful social activity; the two are instead combined.'

- 93-94 (56): 'In *Wilhelm Meisters Apprenticeship* we are in the presence of a *Bildungsroman*. The hero has a real and problematic *Weltanschauung*,

which translates itself into a difficult orientation in relation to life — this is at the core of the novel. This question, typical of the *Bildungsroman*, finds a solution during the course of the narrative, namely in that it is shown, in the end, that the hero is in the process of solving that question, because he has gained a greater mastery over his life and will progress further both in his understanding of it and in the practical sphere. This process is just an interminable one.'

- 95 (57): 'The story of the definition of *Wilhelm Meisters Apprenticeship* is not only a story about the discussion of the right understanding of its contents, but also a reflection of the convictions of the different interpreters and of their own understanding of what *Bildung* is.'

- 95 (58): 'Wilhelm must step down from his ideal heights, where reality is no longer discernible'; 'his path can be trodden because, in unitary philosophical terms, he has the world in him.'

- 95 (59): 'The content of the novel is not definable by any "idea", as much as life is: the novel rather seems to want to show that life is larger than any conception of it.'

- 95-96 (60): 'In this view, *Wilhelm Meisters Apprenticeship* is Goethe's most optimistic novel [...] and one is tempted to attribute this to Schiller's influence.'

- 97 (61): 'In *Der Nachsommer* there is never any concern with earnings, with paid work: the hero lives in such prosperous and unthreatened conditions that he does not have to face this banal question and its troublesome solution.'

- 97 (62): 'From the beginning this youth is without prejudice, overall willing to learn and educable, without critical reservations towards the parental household, his educators and his friends. His formation carries on, uneventfully and gently, without abrupt interruptions.'

- 98: 'I also did not have a specific purpose in mind; rather, it just seemed as if I had to keep on, as if I had something within me that would prove to be true and significant sometime in the future.' (IS, 14)

- 99 (64): 'Heinrich does not find the most significant impressions of his life in the world at large, but rather in a country house, through the contact with a circle of people of refined manners and culture.'

- 100 (66): 'Risach is no educator figure, in that he has no seriously demanding pedagogical ambitions for Heinrich.'

- 101: '"I never doubted but that you would attain this general view because there are forces for the beautiful within you which have still not been led astray and are striving for fulfilment"'. (IS, 223)

- 103-104 (71): 'To guarantee the continuation of the universals of individual *Bildung*, Stifter created an almost a-historical special world, an aesthetically structured world agreeing with notions of *Bildung*, used as a normative utopia meant to drive away contemporary reality, which was valued negatively.'

- 104: 'Such questions put me in a serious, solemn mood; it seemed as if a more profound existence had come into my very nature. If I now collected and categorized less than before, nevertheless it seemed as if my soul were far more advanced than before.' (IS, 192)

- 105 (73): '"I am no Goethe, but I am of his kin."'

- 106: '"The striving in one direction puts a shackle on your spirit, prevents it from seeing what is right next to it, leading it many times to the adventurous and irresponsible. Later when the foundation is laid, a man

must again turn to the specific, if he wants to accomplish anything significant. Then he won't fall prey to one-sidedness. In youth you must practice all things so as to be suitable for the specific things as a man.'" (IS, 199)

- 106 (74): 'The formation is so accurately directed at its aim, the "higher", the complete individual, so adjusted to the meaning of German Classicism, so purely determined by his goal, that his formation appears as form, as a self-contained organism.'

- 108-109 (79): '"I'm repeating what we have often said; your revered father also agrees that a man should choose his life's career for his own sake so as to realize his maximum potential. That way he serves the community in the best way possible. It would be the gravest sin to choose one's path merely, as the expression is used so often, to serve mankind."' (IS, 403); 'First and foremost a man was not on Earth for society, but for himself. And if everyone were here for himself in the best way possible, then he would also be here in the best way possible for society.' (IS, 15)

- 109 (80): 'Stifter thus succeeded in creating an utopian *Bildungsroman* that is a typological manual of a knowing and involved interaction with the world, although he knows that his normative utopia could offer no

active guidance when it came to the relation with the historical-social reality.'

- 111 (84): 'The most significant *Bildungsromane* of the second half of the nineteenth century were Keller's 'Der grüne Heinrich' and Stifter's 'Der Nachsommer', in which the influence of the Goethean concept of *Bildung* appears at its clearest.'

- 112 (86): 'The second version, with its sustained first-person narrative, conciliatory ending and indication of *Bildung* objectives in the chapter titles (and consequent alignment with reader expectations), allowed Keller to draw near to the traditions of the *Bildungsroman.*'

- 113 (88): 'Heinrich's early experiences create in him a deep-seated scepticism towards standardised educational values.'

- 114 (90): 'What is ethical in Heinrich's painting is that he learns to control, by means of hard work and discipline, both the art of mimetic-realistic representation and also his own imagination. He learns spiritual self-control.'

- 115 (91): 'Like Wilhelm Meister, green Henry is a practising artist, and not simply an art-lover like Heinrich Drendorf.'

- 115: 'If I want now, I went on brooding, to contemplate an example of efficacious industry, which is at the same time a true and rational life, there are the life and activities of Friedrich Schiller.' (GH, 529)

- 116: 'About a year later, I was managing the chancery office of a small district which adjoined the one in which the family village was situated. Here I was [...] in a stratum midway between the local community and the State administration, so that I got a glimpse into what was below and what was above, and learnt where things went and where they came from.' (GH, 695)

- 117: '"Whether you continue to follow an artistic career or not", said he, "the pictures will remain almost of the same value to me [...] as landmarks on a path of development [...] or supplement to the story of your youth."' (GH, 623)

- 117 (92): 'In the life of Heinrich's father, *Bildung* means practical formative work in the middle of the community.'

- 119 (93): 'The struggle to achieve a balanced relationship with society and to overcome subjective isolation is a traditional theme of the *Bildungsroman.*'

- 120: 'The world is ruled by no blind chance!'(GH, 610)

- 122 (96): 'This novel combines the inner — psychological and rational — intensity of the *Bildungsroman* tradition [...] with social authenticity, with the economical and cognitive sobriety of European realism.'

- 122 (97): 'The individual must control the multiplicity of his impulses, which will, if they are allowed to expand too much, damage the fabric of reality. But, not only does he have to bring himself into balance, he also has to bring himself into balance with the world.'

- 123: 'But every time we saw each other, whether daily or only yearly, it was a festival for us. And whenever I was troubled with doubt or dissension, I needed only to hear her voice in order to distinguish the voice of Nature herself.' (GH, 705)

- 125: 'He who wishes to help improve the world had better sweep his own doorstep first.' (GH, 691)

- 125 (100): 'In the end, despite all crises and perils faced by Heinrich, despite his resigned surrender to the ways of the world, the view — which

follows in the footsteps of Goethe — of the world as being connected and profound is affirmed.'

- 189 (25): 'Being historical, because it attempts to deal with the image of an epoch, the European pre-war period, but also because pure time is its main subject.'

- 194: 'He had not meant to take the journey seriously or commit himself deeply to it; but to get it over quickly, since it had to be made, to return as he had gone, and to take up his life at the point where, for the moment, he had had to lay it down.' (MM, 4)

- 195: '"No one understands who has not lived up there. Down here the fundamental conception is lacking."' (MM, 254)

- 196: '"How did you come to be an engineer, then?"'
  '"I just happened to — it was more or less outward circumstances that decided the matter."'(MM, 334)

- 198 (36): 'The fact that the conventions always flourish in one form or another only proves that the vast majority of mankind do not choose their

own way, but convention, and consequently develop not themselves but a method and a collective mode of life at the cost of their own wholeness.'[2]

- 199: '"That is what they are like. Lying here and looking at it from this distance, I find it pretty gross. What were the words you used — phlegmatic and — and energetic. That's very good. But what does it mean? It means hard, cold. And what do hard and cold mean? They mean cruel. It's a cruel atmosphere down there, cruel and ruthless."'(MM, 253f)

- 200 (39): 'Every man is, in a certain sense, unconsciously a worse man when he is in society [...] and to that extent relieved of his individual responsibility'.[3]

- 201: 'A man lives not only his personal life, as an individual, but also, consciously or unconsciously, the life of his epoch and his contemporaries.' (MM, 41)

- 202-203 (41): 'The novel can arguably also be read as "narrative of a pre-war world destined to collapse", one that only exists, to quote Thomas Mann once again, thanks "to a still intact capitalist economy".'

[2] Carl Gustav Jung, 'The Development of Personality', in *The Development of Personality*, in *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, ed. Herbert Read et al., trans. R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge, 1954), 17, 174

- 203 (42): 'The upheaval of our world and the upheaval of our consciousness are one and the same. Everything has become relative and therefore doubtful. And while man, hesitant and questioning, contemplates a world that is distracted with treaties of peace and pacts of friendship, with democracy and dictatorship, capitalism and Bolshevism, his spirit yearns for an answer that will allay the turmoil of doubt and uncertainty.'[4]

- 204 (43): 'Today, ten years after the war, we observe [...] the same phrases and catchwords at work. How can we but fear that they will inevitably lead to further catastrophes?'[5]

- 206 (45): 'He was in contact by letter, it appeared, with persons who were at the head of the Portuguese lodge, and there, without much doubt, things were ripening to a decisive event. Hans Castorp would think of him when, before very long, it came to an upset in that country.' (MM, 653)

- 207: '"*Caro*!" Herr Settembrini said. "*Caro amico*! There will be decisions to make, decisions of unspeakable importance for the happiness and the future of Europe; it will fall to your country to decide, in her soul the decision will be consummated. Placed as she is between East and West, she will have to choose, she will have to decide finally and

[4] Ibid., 'The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man', 87
[5] Ibid., 77. For more on Jung's stance on this subject, see 'The Meaning of Psychology for Modern Man', in *Civilization in Transition.*

consciously between the two spheres. You are young, you will have a share in this decision, it is your duty to influence it."'(MM, 652)

- 207 (47): 'The disturber of the peace is a wind that blows into Europe from Asia's vastness, sweeping in on a wide front from the Thrace to the Baltic, scattering the nations before it like dry leaves, or inspiring thoughts that shake the world to its foundations.'[6]

- 208: 'It was as though he were sitting again in his boat on the lake in Holstein, looking with dazzled eyes from the glassy daylight of the western shore to the mist and moonbeams that wrapped the eastern heavens.' (MM, 205)

- 208 (48): 'Without doctrine, without false concepts of righteousness and without belief in words and antitheses, free, sacred and delicate — if only Europe could be like this.'

- 210 (50): 'Everything is already written with a sympathetic pen, so to speak, in the soul of a young person, and "the task of the educator is to help identify the right and eliminate the false through hard work, because the latter is always trying to move to the forefront".'

[6] Ibid., 'Wotan', 187

- 213: 'So that nobody any longer knew who was the devout and who the free-thinker.' (MM, 589)

- 213: 'Nowadays, when Hans Castorp relieved his mind, he did not hem and haw, become involved and stick in the middle. He said his say to the end like a man, rounded off his period, let his voice drop and went his way.' (MM, 736)

- 214-215: 'It seemed to him, Hans Castorp, as though somewhere between two intolerable positions, between bombastic humanism and analphabetic barbarism, must lie something which one might personally call the humane.' (MM, 659)

- 217: '"You, of course, do not know that there is such a thing as alchemistic-hermetic pedagogy, transubstantiation, from lower to higher, ascending degrees, if you understand what I mean. But of course matter that is capable of taking those ascending stages by dint of outward pressure must have a little something in itself to start with."'(MM, 752)

- 218 (60): 'Paracelsus, like all the philosophical alchemists, was seeking for something that would give him a hold on the dark, body-bound nature of man, on the soul which, intangibly interwoven with the world and with matter, appeared before itself in the terrifying form of strange, demoniacal

figures [...] The Church might exorcise demons and banish them, but that only alienated man from his own nature.'[7]

- 220 (62): 'Perhaps, no, certainly he would have become more assured, 'but surely he would have remained the learner, the... listener, testing, rejecting, choosing, no one's servant, remaining his own self and the friend of all good men.'

- 221 (63): 'Sympathy between doctor and patient is surely desirable, and a case might be made out for the view that only he who suffers can be the guide and healer of the suffering.' (MM, 170)

- 222: 'In one aspect death was a holy, a pensive, a spiritual state, possessed of a certain mournful beauty. In another it was quite different. It was precisely the opposite, it was very physical, it was material, it could not possibly be called either holy, or pensive, or beautiful — not even mournful.' (MM, 35)

- 223 (64): 'Under the structural conditions of "The Magic Mountain", death is "broken" so that its true shape, built by non-form, can be brought to light.'

[7] Jung, 'Paracelsus as a Spiritual Phenomenon', in *Alchemical Studies* (1967), 13, 161

- 224-225: '"Dissolution, putrefaction," said Hans Castorp. "They are the same thing as combustion: combination with oxygen — am I right?"

  "To a T. Oxidization."

  "And life?"

  "Oxidization too. The same. Yes, young man [...]. *Tut*, living consists in dying, no use mincing the matter — *une destruction organique*, as some Frenchman with his native levity has called it."'(MM, 338)

- 225-226: 'Now I know that it is not of our single souls we dream. We dream anonymously and communally, if each after his fashion. The great soul of which we are a part may dream through us, in our manner of dreaming, its own secret dreams.' (MM, 624)

- 227 (68): 'Now the Olympian magic mountain opens up before us, revealing all its roots. The Greeks knew and felt the fears and horrors of existence: in order to be able to live at all they had to interpose the radiant dream-birth of the Olympians between themselves and those horrors.'[8]

- 228 (69): 'All of humanity trembles with fear when faced with the secret of man.'

[8] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music*, ed. Martin Tanner, trans. Shaun Whiteside (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 22

- 229 (70): 'To confront a person with his shadow is to show him his own light. Once one has experienced a few times what it is like to stand judgingly between the opposites, one begins to understand what is meant by the self. Anyone who perceives his shadow and his light simultaneously sees himself from two sides and thus gets in the middle'.[9]

- 229 (71): 'Because the anima wants life, she wants both good and bad [...] Bodily life as well as psychic life have the impudence to get along much better without conventional morality, and they often remain the healthier for it.'[10]

- 230: 'The sea for him meant the colourless, tempestuous northern tides, to which he clung with inarticulate, childish love. Of the Mediterranean, Naples, Sicily, he knew nothing.' (MM, 619)

- 231-232: '"Man is the lord of counterpositions, they can be only through him, and thus he is more aristocratic than they. More so than death, too aristocratic for death — that is the freedom of his mind. More aristocratic that life, too aristocratic for life, and that is the piety in his heart. There is both rhyme and reason in what I say, I have made a dream poem of humanity. I will cling to it. I want to be good. I will let death have no

[9] Jung, 'Good and Evil in Analytical Psychology' (1964), 10, 463
[10] Again Jung, this time in 'Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious', in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (London: Routledge, 1959), 9.1, 28.

mastery over my thoughts. [...] I will remember. I will keep faith with death in my heart, yet well remember that faith with death and with the dead is evil, is hostile to humankind, as soon as we give it power over thought and action. *For the sake of goodness and love, man shall let death have no sovereignty over his thoughts.*'" (MM, 625f)

- 232 (73): 'The self is no mere concept or logical postulate; it is a psychic reality, only part of it conscious, while for the rest it embraces the life of the unconscious.'[11]

- 235-236 (78): 'If the world of human friendliness is to survive the demonical, then the ethical affirmation of the world of form and humanity needs to be stated more assertively.'

- 236 (79): 'The Room of the Past is thus the Room of Life, because life is represented artistically in it — where death cannot enter. The urns and sarcophaguses are integrated in the artistic representation of life's totality. The fact that the way to this room passes through the Door of Death [reveals that] the Room of the Past is an artistic attempt to assimilate death into life.'

[11] Jung, 'A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity', in *Psychology and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1958), 11, 157

- 278: 'Life without time, life without care or hope, life as depravity, assiduous stagnation; life as dead.' (MM, 790)

- 279-280: '"They make pretty free with a human being's idea of time, up here. You wouldn't believe it. Three weeks are just like a day to them. You'll learn all about it," he said. "One's ideas get changed."'(MM, 8)

- 281: '"But when I lie and look at the planets, even the three thousand years get to seem 'recently', and I begin to think quite intimately of the Chaldeans, and how in their time they gazed at the stars and made verses on them — and all that is humanity too."

  "I must say, you have very tall ideas in your head."'(MM, 469)

- 282: 'Time has no divisions to mark its passage, there is never a thunder-storm or blare of trumpets to announce the beginning of a new month or year. Even when a new century begins it is only we mortals who ring bells and fire off pistols.' (MM, 287)

- 283: '[This story] is far older than its years; its age may not be measured by length of days, nor the weight of the time on its head reckoned by the rising or setting of suns.' (MM, 'Foreword')

- 284: 'Joachim's rash departure did — in honesty — offer his cousin a support, now, before the impossible should become utterly so, a guide and companion on a path which of himself he would never, never find again.' (MM, 532)

- 285 (130): 'No track of time is kept after that happens.'

- 287: '"The physical goes over into the spiritual, and the other way on, and you can't tell them apart. [...] But the result is what we see, the dynamic effect — he puts us in his pocket."' (MM, 735f)

- 288 (134): 'Personality is the supreme realization of the innate idiosyncrasy of a living being. It is an act of high courage flung in the face of life, the absolute affirmation of all that constitutes the individual.'[12]

- 289-290 (136): 'Spirit that drags a man away from life, seeking fulfilment only in itself is a false spirit. [...] Life and spirit are two powers or necessities between which man is placed. Spirit gives meaning to his life, and the possibility of its greatest development. But life is essential to spirit, since its truth is nothing if it cannot live.'[13]

[12] Jung, 'The Development of Personality' (1954), 17, 171
[13] Jung, 'Spirit and Life', *The Structure and the Dynamics of the Psyche* (London: Routledge, 1960), 8, 337

- 292 (143): 'It is not for nothing that our age calls for the redeemer personality, for the one who can emancipate himself from the inescapable grip of the [social] collective and save at least his own soul.'[14]

- 293 (144): 'The Grail is a secret, but so is humanity. As even man is a secret.'

- 293: 'And with horror [Hans Castorp] understood that at the end of everything only the physical remained, only the teeth and the nails.' (MM, 880)

- 294 (146): 'Adventures of the flesh and in the spirit, while enhancing thy simplicity, granted thee to know in the spirit what in the flesh thou scarcely couldst have done.' (MM, 899f)

- 295 (148): 'Its duty is duty to life, its will is health, its goal the future.'

- 296 (149): 'Man is not always in possession of his own self, our self-knowledge is insofar weak, as we don't have what is Ours always present. Only in split seconds of uncommon clarity and vision do we truly know about ourselves.'

[14] Jung, 'The Development of Personality' (1954), 17, 178

- 297 (150): 'What remains? [...] Humanity, balance, goodness and love.'

- 297 (151): 'Before the First World War, there were symptoms of a mental change taking place in Europe. The medieval picture of the world was breaking up and the metaphysical authority that ruled it was fast disappearing.'[15]

- 302 (159): 'And music as the overwhelming art of establishing relations and of thinking about death, which lifts the individual life as a specific form, while ate the same time determining its worth.'

- 303 (161): 'Protestant, moral, puritanical tendencies are part, perhaps, of my blood.'

- 304 (162): 'Mann spoke of 'Christian moral' also [...] as autonomous moral, an instance in place of God.'

- 304 (163): 'Religiosity is a term that is used here for its broadness, yet not on its own, in order not to give an impression that it is something founded on a dogmatic viewpoint.'

[15] Jung, 'After the Catastrophe' (1964), 10, 214

- 305 (165): 'What is being mentioned is Kant's ethical primacy. But this thought lives on, it points towards "the experience of Goethe", which brought with it a "confirmation of the legitimacy of the individual."'

- 307 (168): 'The belief in God is the belief in love, in life.'

- 309 (170): 'What can, after all, be described as religious'; 'the thought of death'.

- 309 (171): 'The classical conception of man held that man could partake of the life of the spirit, consequently considering that self-perfection was possible.'

- 310-311 (172): 'Even the Christ-figure is not a totality, for it lacks the nocturnal side of the psyche's nature, the darkness of the spirit, and is also without sin. Without the integration of evil there is no totality, nor can evil be "added to the mixture by force".'[16]

- 311 (173): 'In the Christian concept, on the other hand, the archetype is hopelessly split into two irreconcilable halves.'[17]

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[16] Jung, 'A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity' (1958), 11, 156
[17] Jung, 'Christ, a Symbol of the Self', *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self* (London: Routledge, 1959), 9.2, 42

- 313 (175): 'If one inclines to regard the archetype of the self as the real agent and hence takes Christ as symbol of the self, one must bear in mind that there is a considerable difference between "perfection" and "completeness". The Christ image is as good as perfect (at least it is meant to be so), while the archetype (so far as known) denotes completeness but is far from being perfect.'[18]

[18] Ibid., p. 68f.

Appendix II

The chronological sequence of *The Nick Adams Stories*[1]

'Three Shots'*

'Indian Camp'

'The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife'

'Ten Indians'

'The Indians Moved Away'*

'The End of Something'

'The Three-Day Blow'

'The Last Good Country'*

'The Light of the World'

'The Battler'

'The Killers'

'Crossing the Mississippi'*

'Night Before Landing'*

'Nick sat against the wall…'

'Now I lay me'

'A Way You'll Never Be'

'In Another Country'

'Big Two-Hearted River'

'On Writing'*

'Summer People'*

'Wedding Day'*

'An Alpine Idyll'

'Cross-Country Snow'

'A Day's Wait'

'Fathers and Sons'

[1] Stories published posthumously are indicated with an asterisk.

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